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Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER and MELVIN J. LASKY

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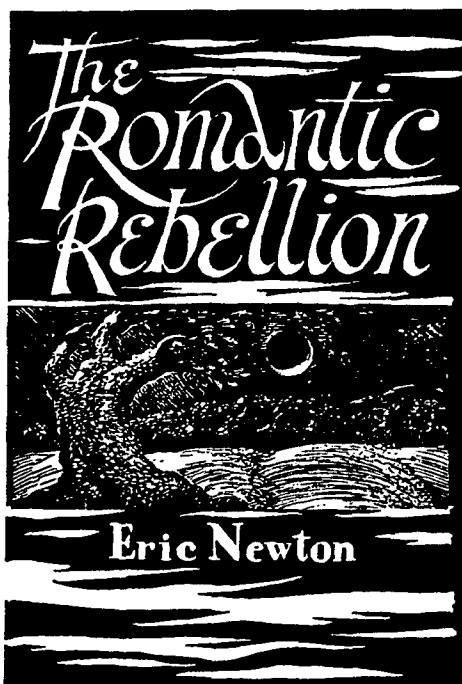
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The Mass Media

WITH the development of new techniques, and the increase in leisure, income, and education, we now have for the first time a centralised communications industry commanding a national audience through the "mass media"—popular newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the cinema. The question is: who should own and control this industry? And should it supply its services at a profit according to market demand, or operate on some principle of "public service"?

This question arouses almost obsessive emotions both amongst apologists and critics of the media, and on both Right and Left. The apologists, who are usually the practitioners, display a touchy, neurotic defensiveness, partly because the criticism comes typically from people—artists, intellectuals, and moralists—with whom they would like to identify themselves. The critics, for their part, now focus on the media the denunciations which they have always levelled against affluence and materialism. And the denunciation to-day has an especially strident ring. For, accustomed in the past to a shared respect for the high standards of a minority culture, they now for the first time discover and confront the apparent cultural preferences of the majority; and they are at once horrified by the low standards, uncertain as to their relationship with the new culture, and apprehensive for the future of their own.

On the Right, moreover, the *laudator temporis*

¹ In Britain, of course, the media are also made the scapegoat for anti-Americanism.

² For a recent symposium which gives almost every version of the stereotypes, cf. *Culture for the Millions?*, edited by Norman Jacobs (van Nostrand, 1961). I largely share the position taken up by Professor Edward Shils in this symposium. For a summary of the many critiques of the "mass society," cf. Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* (Glencoe, 1960).

acti sees the media as the symbol of the "mass society"—populous, egalitarian, mobile, noisy, and mechanised—which threatens his aristocratic values and privileged tranquillity. On the Left, as has often been said, the Madison Avenue executive (though in his grey flannel suit he hardly seems up to the part) has succeeded to the allegorical role of villain previously played by the Finance Capitalist, the Oil Magnate, or the Armaments King; and he is made the scapegoat for all the frustrations which some Left intellectuals perhaps naturally feel in the affluent society—in particular, for their disappointment with the workers, who grow steadily less militant and revolutionary, and spend their newfound leisure neither in studying history and philosophy (as Trotsky hoped), nor in creating a new collective culture (as the new romantics hoped), but rather on movies, women's magazines, and television. Rather than give up long-cherished and idealistic myths and dreams, these intellectuals prefer to blame the media; it is they, with their hidden, conspiratorial power, which have somehow "corrupted" the innocent workers.¹

The debate on the media is also heavily stereotyped, with positions on both sides rigidly entrenched; and, in addition, it is usually conducted on the basis of breath-taking generalities for most of which no evidence of any kind exists. For all these reasons one sometimes feels that in our present state of knowledge any further discussion is futile. But at least it follows that one can state one's own position briefly and forthrightly.²

THE QUESTION to be answered is not whether we as individuals like or dislike the media, but whether their influence for good or ill is so great, and their present set-up so unsatisfactory in relation to this influence, that

political action is needed to alter the set-up. First, then, we must ask what degree of influence they exert over men's minds.

On this I am somewhat sceptical, believing the answer *on present evidence* to be probably very little. I am therefore equally unconvinced by the extreme optimistic and extreme pessimistic case. The claims of the apologists, for example, seem to me preposterous.

Modern advertising is a free and universal system of Adult Education... Commercial television vitally supplements the work of school and class-room in helping us to lead more civilised lives... A valuable area of shared experience... The mass newspapers are the essential guarantee of a truly-informed public opinion.

The proper answer to such claims is to recite them to oneself as one reads of a national daily hounding yet another wretched individual who happens to have offended the Proprietor, or as one floats past the corset and underwear advertisements which line the escalators of London tube stations. They do not merit further discussion amongst serious people.

Yet I find the extreme opposite view equally unconvincing, although ethically preferable because more serious and disinterested. According to this view, the media have a corrupting effect both on moral and social values and on cultural standards. They encourage material acquisitiveness, the worship of success, an obsessive concern with social status, conservative political attitudes, and juvenile delinquency; they menace serious art either by neglecting or by "processing" it; they debase popular taste by the trivial and meretricious content of their output; and they encourage a mindless, undifferentiated "passivity" of response in contrast to the active and participant nature of the old folk-culture.

I find this unpalatable both on *a priori* and empirical grounds. First, I know of no clear historical evidence to suggest that these social and moral attitudes are more pronounced to-day than in many past societies which were not afflicted with mass media. One could surely argue that social emulation was more marked in the days of Jane Austen, the worship of success in the days of Samuel Smiles, and money-obsession in the days of the Forsytes or of Newport and the American Baroque. At any rate, these attitudes have been arousing the wrath of moralists for rather a long time—from Ecclesiastes, Diogenes, Cato, Christ, St. Ambrose, St. Francis, Latimer, Savonarola,

Ruskin, and Matthew Arnold, down to the present day.

Secondly, many of these attitudes seem to be neither more nor less apparent in Britain and America than in Communist countries which at least have no *commercial* media.

Thirdly, to the extent that some of the attitudes, if not fundamentally deeper, manifest themselves more widely in present-day society, this is surely due not to the mass media, but to the process of industrialisation and democratisation of which the media are themselves *one symptom*. For example, the generational revolt, which attracts so much attention owing to the fringe problem of juvenile delinquency, is a universal phenomenon in all advanced countries whether capitalist, mixed, or Communist. It stems from the fact that this teenage generation, unlike any of its predecessors, has money to spare, is socially emancipated, reaches puberty earlier, and has far wider horizons and possibilities—including possibilities of tension and failure—than its parents ever had.

AGAIN, AN INTENSE DESIRE for material possessions is, not surprisingly, also a world-wide phenomenon. It is very evident in the Communist countries, and even more so in the underdeveloped nations which are preoccupied, and rightly so, with economic growth and rising material standards. But this does not represent some basic change in human nature, to be blamed on the machinations of Madison Avenue. It rather reflects the fact that, as a consequence of the explosive upsurge of economic development which began with the Industrial Revolution and has gathered momentum ever since, entire peoples have for the first time in history the possibility and hence the expectation of rising material standards. Having lost the wantlessness which (as Lassalle always complained) characterises the extremely poor, they now propose to improve their standards just as the wealthier classes have always done. It seems impertinent of middle-class intellectuals to attribute this to advertising and the media, or to label it as acquisitiveness or social emulation. It represents a basic human desire for choice, leisure, comfort, privacy, and a more spacious family life; it is typical that in Britain those most eager to earn more by working shifts or overtime are the young married workers, intensely family-conscious, who want a car, a new house, a well-equipped kitchen, holidays away from home, and (increasingly) savings

against the future—"luxuries" which the middle class long ago took for granted.³

AGAIN, I know of no clear evidence for the view that "high culture" is threatened by the media. In terms of creativity, it would seem hard to prove that serious art, original scholarship, or scientific achievement had markedly declined in Western society—though it is not quite clear how one would set about either proving or disproving it; and if one could prove it, one could do so equally for many previous periods of history! In terms of dissemination, we see a sensational quantitative advance (as shown by the sales of serious paperbacks and long-playing records, and the attendance at art-galleries and museums), though we do not know exactly what qualitative significance we attach to it.

It is not always easy to understand the argument about "processing" and "packaging," since the words are generally used emotively with no attempt at definition.⁴ No doubt, however, there are some elements in serious culture which cannot be widely disseminated without being diluted, and some ideas so complicated as to be incapable of accurate summary. But the argument seems often to imply not merely that

³ Cf. Ferdynand Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (Heinemann, 1961). But some car-owning socialist intellectuals have a new version of the old Right-wing "coals in the bath" argument—that the workers only want a car as a status symbol.

⁴ For example, a statement like this (by Mr. Robert Brustein in *Partisan Review* 5-6, 1961) makes no sense to me. "There is no way for unofficial or unpopular expressions to reach a substantial public without first being processed by the media. A wall is descending in front of the intelligentsia, as thick and impenetrable as a wall of steel, which soon may ghettoise all thought that cannot promise quick profits." In fact the intelligentsia has far more access to a "substantial public" than ever before—including (in Britain at least) the "unofficial" intelligentsia: Wesker, Osborne, Berger, Tynan, Foot, or Taylor. Indeed, this is precisely the cause of much of the irritation. For the artist or intellectual, when invited (for example) to produce a television programme, often feels an extreme uncertainty as to *how* he should communicate with a new audience through a new medium.

⁵ *Culture for the Millions?*, p. 49. But many of these critics want it both ways. If the media do not put on serious programmes, they are attacked for neglecting culture in the interest of profit; if they do put them on, they are guilty of processing or packaging.

serious culture must always be a minority culture (which may be true), but that its frontiers are never to be extended beyond their present position—that any cultural diffusion is impossible, all adult education meaningless, the only "real" education an élite one, and anything else simply a pandering to profit or social snobbery. Consider, for example, the intolerably condescending and elitist implications of the last clause of this criticism by Hannah Arendt: "to organise, disseminate, and change cultural objects in order to make them palatable to those who want to be entertained or—and this is worse—to be "educated," that is, to acquire as cheaply as possible some kind of cultural knowledge to improve their social status."⁵ So much for our belief in adult education!

Lastly, there is surely no evidence of a decline in popular cultural taste. The old folk-culture was almost wholly devoid of artistic content. The level of intellectual inquiry has manifestly risen. The notion of the nullifying, deadening influence of the media must seem strange to anyone accustomed to violent family or public-house arguments about newspaper articles or television programmes. And the theory of the passive, captive audience seems equally eccentric in the light of the intense and active family life in working-class areas with its immense range of hobbies, do-it-yourself activities, gardening, house-repair, and (the greatest change of all) family travel; there is no sign here of the much-heralded "shadow of boredom" over increasing leisure. We may take different views about the desirability of the shift to *home-oriented* leisure activities. But it is certainly not a shift to a drugged, undifferentiated passivity.

TRUE, these are all dogmatic generalisations, which we can bandy about indefinitely and still not reach a conclusion. Fortunately, however, with the rapid growth in communications research we now have a considerable amount of empirical evidence. And this tends to support the agnostic view that the media are less central to people's lives and have less influence on their attitudes than either the optimists or the pessimists assert. The influence either for good or ill seems in practice to be rather marginal.

The research—and this is typical of the British performance in the newer social sciences—is almost all American. But we may take the two major British studies as examples. The

Nuffield study of television and the child concluded, characteristically, that

the influence of television on children's leisure, interests, knowledge, outlook, and values proves to be far less colourful and dramatic than popular opinion is inclined to suppose.⁶

On the one hand, children are not glued to the television set irrespective of programme; they are not markedly stimulated to aggression or delinquency; they do not become in any sense more "passive," jaded, gullible, or unimaginative; younger or duller children gain in general knowledge; and, after the initial impact, book-reading is on balance encouraged rather than discouraged.

On the other hand, most children derive no net gain in general knowledge or cultural interests; they are not much stimulated to new hobbies or activities; a minority are disturbed by violent programmes (which the authors therefore recommend should be cut down); and the medium has some small (and rather ambiguous) effect in propounding "middle-class" ideas about "getting on" in life. "Television, then, is not as black as it is painted, but neither is it the great harbinger of culture and enlightenment which its enthusiasts tend to claim for it." As the authors remark, every new medium in turn—Press, cinema, radio, and television—is

seen as bringing about a change for the worse, a lowering of standards and behaviour. . . . Three things combine to distort the picture of television's true effects: the intrinsic power of the medium is exaggerated, the resilience of the children tends to be seriously underestimated, while at the same time the past is idealised.

The other British study concerns political attitudes. It always seemed unlikely that these could be subtly manipulated by the media. At

⁶ Hilde T. Himmelweit, A. N. Oppenheim, and Pamela Vince, *Television and the Child* (O.U.P., 1958), p. 40.

⁷ Joseph Trenaman and Denis McQuail, *Television and the Political Image* (Methuen, 1961), pp. 191–192 (author's italics). There is no evidence that propaganda *between* elections is vastly more important. It is nevertheless illogical to have severe limits on permissible expenditure by political candidates during the three weeks of a campaign, but none on party expenditure between campaigns. There is a strong case for revising the electoral law so as to control party political expenditure whenever incurred.

⁸ Cf. Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960* (Cape, 1962).

one end of the world we have seen spontaneous outbreaks of popular revolt in countries where the media have for years been monopolised for government propaganda—in Hungary and Poland in 1956, in East Germany continuously, and (a cultural revolt) amongst Soviet youth to-day. At the other end, the recent Liberal revival in Britain (whether it proves permanent or temporary) occurred with no help from the media and, indeed, a year after the only Liberal mass newspaper (the *News Chronicle*) had disappeared; while the United States persists in electing Democratic Congresses in the face of media which are 80 per cent Republican.

Our scepticism is confirmed by the empirical study. In the British General Election of 1959

no medium or source of propaganda or combination of sources had any ascertainable effect on attitude changes. And attitude changes were certainly large enough to be susceptible of effect. . . . What is established here is not merely an absence of cause and effect but a *definite and consistent barrier between sources of communication and movement of attitudes in the political field at the General Election.*⁷

The well-known American election studies have also shown that campaign propaganda and the mass media have little effect in changing political attitudes; their function is rather to reinforce or crystallise *existing* voting intentions.

THIS CONCLUSION IS NOT, I think, invalidated by the evidence that Mr. Kennedy's performance in his television debates with Mr. Nixon was one of the decisive factors in the close-run Presidential election of 1960. For the Republicans spent more than the Democrats on total radio and television propaganda, and Mr. Nixon was supported by nearly 80 per cent of all newspapers and 100 per cent of all mass-circulation magazines which endorsed a candidate.⁸ This seems to confirm the view that the collective effect of the media—of their total propaganda, content, and control—is slight, while yet suggesting that an individual politician may find in television a powerful vehicle, corresponding to the mass-meeting or Midlothian-style campaign in days gone by, for the projection of his oratory or personality (provided of course that these are superior to those of his opponent!). Indeed, the effect is to make politics more democratic. Thus an individual may successfully exploit the *medium*, while the sum total effect of the *media* is negligible.

Generally, the detailed American studies indi-

cate that in all spheres the media typically reinforce or activate existing values and attitudes, only very rarely alter them, and scarcely ever form or originate them. Moreover their efficiency is in inverse proportion to the importance of the issue; that is, they are very ineffective in changing social and moral attitudes, only moderately effective even in influencing "fashion" (women's clothes, cosmetics, choice of films, etc.), and comparatively effective only in the marketing of commodities and especially brands.⁹

WHY, THEN, are so many intellectuals so obsessed with their manipulative power?

Usually ignorant of the large volume of research and often unacquainted with sociology and psychology, they have developed extreme illusions about the nature both of the media and the audience. In front of the media they appear hypnotised as though by a snake, and bereft of all power of intellectual criticism. They accept at face value the most fantastic claims, guilelessly believing that Madison Avenue has harnessed the most potent secrets of psychology and sociology, of motivational research and subliminal techniques. From *Culture and Environment* in 1933 ("a branch of applied psychology ... a highly specialised profession ... years of carefully recorded and tabulated experiment ... he devises his appeal in the confidence that the average member of the public will respond like an automaton") down to the latest "New Left" pamphlet, they produce an endless series of tracts containing naïvely formalistic quantitative analyses of the *contents* of the media, but no qualitative analysis of their *effects*; that is, they take the media at their own valuation and solemnly assume (with a typical lack of robust

faith in ordinary people) that the desired effects are inevitably achieved.¹⁰

IN FACT, the techniques of the media, far from being of scientific precision, are often a crude and hit-and-miss affair. And even if they were not, the individual has immensely strong defensive mechanisms—of selective exposure, perception and retention—whereby to protect his existing predispositions. Study after study shows his extraordinary determination only to read, hear, believe, or remember communications which accord with his existing views. Our knowledge of psychology or sociology does not approach the point at which this can be overcome, or the techniques of the media used manipulatively in the same way as drugs or brain-surgery. We can say firmly that in our present state of knowledge there are no known devices by which we can be deprived (save for short periods of time under extreme duress, as in a Korean prison-camp) of our basic freedom of choice and capacity to determine our own values. (Which of course does not mean that taste and fashion cannot be influenced.)

THE CRITICS have an equally pessimistic and eccentric view of society, picturing it (and hence also the audience of the media) as an atomised, faceless, undifferentiated mass of solitary individuals, alienated from any community, disconnected and disintegrated in the lonely crowd, and hence intensely vulnerable to manipulation. In fact, of course, the normal individual is not in the slightest degree atomised or undifferentiated. He is a member of a family, a class, a race, a nation, a religion, a profession, and a local community, the product of a particular heredity, upbringing, and environment—and these age-old influences have not suddenly evaporated with the onset of the silver screen. He is a member of a whole network of formal or informal small groups—at work, at school, in the neighbourhood, social cliques, clubs, groups based on a church or hobby or trade union. Sociology more and more emphasises the primary importance of these groups for the creation of attitudes, opinions, and values; particularly in communications research, the "opinion-leaders" in each group emerge as having far greater influence than the media—and there is no clear proof that the opinion-leaders are more affected by the media than the others. The picture of the atomised mass viewer

⁹ The large volume of American research is summarised in Joseph T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communications* (Glencoe, 1961).

¹⁰ The quotations in the bracket are from F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, *Culture and Environment* (Chatto & Windus, 1933), p. 12; there has been no advance in this type of sub-sociological criticism from then until the Pilkington Report (published after this article was written). This Report makes no reference to any of the research quoted above, and relies for its view of "the immense power of television" solely on the unsupported claims of advertisers and the unsupported fears of various worthy organisations like the Women's Institutes and the T.U.C. Luckily, though for the wrong reasons, it comes to broadly the right conclusions.

or reader, with a *tabula rasa* of an empty mind, is a snobbish intellectual's nightmare. We are each a bundle of emotions and prejudices, subject to endless and often conflicting social pulls; and the media are only one amongst them.

It may be that after several more years of exposure, especially to the newer media, future research will show that some major long-run influence is at work. I personally rather doubt it. But at least the present evidence lends no support to those who take an alarmist (or a glowing) view of the influence of the media.¹¹

IF, THEN, the media do not have a decisive influence either for good or ill, why should they not be left to market forces and the price-mechanism? True, much of their present output (though perhaps less than non-viewing intellectuals think) is inane, banal, trivial, mawkish, or offensive; and scarce talent is wasted, and to some extent perverted, in producing it. But this seems to be what most people choose. And (quite apart from the democratic principle of freedom to communicate) why should not people freely choose their tastes and entertainment just as they freely choose their economic goods?

This question is not always honestly faced on the Left; for there is a stock pat answer—to deny that freedom of choice exists. The public, it is said, has been so conditioned and brain-washed by the media that its taste is effectively predetermined. The workers do not really *choose* Radio Luxembourg, *Reveille*, leg-shows, or horror comics—the choice is *imposed* on them by the “advertisers and mass psychologists, the pseudo-scientists of the new society”; and “the sovereignty of the consumer is a phrase that reeks of dishonesty.”¹² This of course is non-

sense; as I have just shown, the media simply do not possess this overwhelming power to *manipulate* our tastes and deprive us of “free choice.”

It is then further argued that there is no free choice in practice inasmuch as the media controllers, solely concerned with maximum profits and maximum audience, always cater for the lowest common denominator of taste; they produce only the most immediately popular programmes, and we cannot see how people *would* react if they were given a choice between the better and the worse. “It is then stupid and even vicious, when it is clear that no real comparison exists, to use the evidence of immediate results as proof of the unalterable vulgarity of the public.”¹³ This argument is also untenable as it stands. The present range of choice is too limited. But it is still considerable—certainly wide enough to offer a “real comparison.” The majority *could* have chosen the *News Chronicle* or *Daily Herald* instead of the *Daily Express* or *Daily Mirror* (though, as I argue below, the *minority* which wanted the *News Chronicle* should have been allowed to keep it). It *can* choose between the *Observer* and the *News of the World*; between serious and frivolous paperbacks; between experimental and horror films; between an art-gallery and leg-show; between the Third, the Home, and the Light programmes; between B.B.C. and commercial television, and between a wide range of thoughtful or entertaining programmes—for even commercial producers are not solely short-term profit-maximisers; they also want the goodwill of government commissions, the praise of the critics, and the esteem of intellectuals. All in all, there is a great deal of experimenting with different levels and types of taste, and a wide variety of provision.

¹¹ And we must not, like the Pilkington Report, *presume* the influence without any evidence. For if we did, should we not by analogy ban or control not only all the media, but also the sale of liquor, the Communist Party, mixed marriages, homosexuality, strip-tease shows, Henry Miller, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*?

¹² This quotation, which could be paralleled over and over again, is taken from Dennis Potter, *The Glittering Coffin* (Gollancz, 1960).

¹³ Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Chatto & Windus, 1961), p. 338. The use of the phrase “unalterable vulgarity” is typically emotive; it is not the point at all.

¹⁴ In fact, there is evidence from surveys of reading habits that the popular newspapers are ahead of their readers in the amount of space which they devote to serious news.

AND WHAT IS THE result? It is not that there is no demand for the serious and significant; on the contrary, in absolute terms it is encouragingly high. But *most* people for most of the time choose the escapist, the diverting, or the trivial. To conclude otherwise is to deny all the evidence of newspaper circulation figures, box-office receipts, and radio and television audience ratings—evidence which makes it plain that the media are offering what most of the public currently want.¹⁴

ANY ARGUMENT for intervention, then, must be put quite differently. And there is such an argument. First, although considerable

choice exists and *majority* tastes are catered for, there is still too little variety of output and hence an undue neglect of *minority* tastes which properly should be satisfied. This arises mainly from the fact of monopoly or at least of a high degree of concentration. In the newspaper world, we now have no popular Liberal daily, and the only committed Labour daily is in the unpredictable hands of Mr. Cecil King. The cinema industry is effectively controlled by two large groups. Radio is controlled by a single state monopoly. And we have only two television channels.

Moreover, the commercial television channel will never find it profitable to cater for minority tastes, not (as is popularly assumed) from the mere fact of being commercial, but because *it cannot sell different programmes at different prices in different markets*. Other commercial producers can market (say) an expensive art magazine or a Rolls-Royce, however small the demand, by charging a higher price than for *Tit-Bits* or a Ford Popular. But commercial television cannot charge the viewer more for grand opera than for soap opera. If it could, it might make grand opera pay, just as the art magazine and the Rolls-Royce pay; as it must charge uni-

formly, the profit motive pulls it towards the largest possible market, with the danger that minority programmes will be squeezed out. Thus a single-price commercially-oriented medium may give the public less choice even than it would be willing to pay for if it had the opportunity.¹⁵ All these factors unduly limit the range of choice and the right of minorities both to communicate and receive.

Secondly, there is an educational argument. This is not based on the authoritarian paternalism of a Lord Reith, imbued with the conviction (springing, it is true, from idealism and high moral purpose) that the "paternalist" knows better than the public what is good for them. "It is occasionally indicated to us," wrote Lord Reith, "that we [the B.B.C.] are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need—and not what they want—but few know what they want and very few what they need;" and he rejected the idea that the B.B.C. should "prosecute the obviously popular lines; count its clients; study and meet their reactions; curry favour; subordinate itself to the vote."¹⁶ It was of course this superior *de-haut-en-bas* attitude, symbolised by the "Reith Sunday," which (far more than the pressure group) created the climate in which commercial television was born and welcomed.¹⁷

¹⁵ In theory the answer is "Pay Television" charging differential prices. But in practice the sponsors of "Pay Television" see its object as being mainly to show new feature films and major sporting events. Moreover, some minority programmes would not be economic at any price.

¹⁶ Quoted in Asa Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting* (Oxford, 1961). As the Beveridge Committee commented, there is a danger that "when a sense of mission such as animates the B.B.C. is combined with security of office it may grow into a sense of divine right, as it did in the case of Charles I" (Cmd. 8116, p. 48).

¹⁷ The commercial television pressure group was highly efficient, squalid in its methods, and unattractive in its aims (because financially self-interested). But it did not represent a great concentration of economic power. Most of large-scale industry was neutral or passive. The radio industry itself was divided (Pye, for example, being for and Thorn against); so were the advertisers. The press and the cinema were mostly, the theatres entirely, and the whole Establishment passionately, against it. Indeed the episode makes it hard to sustain any power-élite theory of any kind! Only six of Mr. Barratt-Brown's 400 "controllers" took part, three on each side; the Establishment was routed; and so were the mass media, which were predominantly opposed. The campaign succeeded (though not completely, since most of the pressure group wanted sponsoring) for the simple reason that the majority of the Conservative Party were in favour.

THE TRUE CASE is more modest. It is based on the propositions that while the media cannot condition or determine public taste as the extremist critics think, yet they have *some* educational potential; and while this might be irrelevant in a society with civilised standards of universal education, it is distinctly relevant in a society like our own which has grossly neglected education in the past and accepts intolerably low standards even to-day.

We are then surely justified, not in imposing (*à la* Reith) a particular view or level of taste, nor in denying to television (for example) its prime and legitimate function as a source of recreation and entertainment, but in demanding a wider range of serious programmes than would be chosen by immediate majority vote; in the hope that over the years the public, having been offered this range, will more and more freely choose it. In the same way, we justify compulsory schooling on the grounds that people may not adequately assess the advantages of education until they have actually experienced it.

This was indeed the theory behind the post-war B.B.C. Light, Home and Third Pro-

grammes; it was hoped that over time, with increasing education and discrimination, listeners would graduate from the first through the second to the third. This was too simplistic and categorical an approach; and the programmes were not particularly suited to the end in view. But the *principle* is surely right. And in practice there is some evidence that serious programmes can and do stimulate ideas, increase knowledge, encourage book-reading, and promote an interest in the arts (especially music); they can, that is, fulfil a primary educational role.¹⁸ We must not of course exaggerate the possibilities, bearing in mind the size of the audience, the shortness of time, and the lack of discipline; a general television network, for example, as opposed to a specialised educational channel, cannot provide an integrated, cumulative educational experience. The aim is limited, perhaps quasi-educational in character; it is none the less important in semi-educated Britain.

BUT AS DEMOCRATS we must be completely clear about the qualifications. We are *not* trying to remove the media altogether from the sphere of free choice. We are *not* denying the right of any group, profit-inspired or otherwise, to communicate with any audience on any terms (subject to accepted laws on libel and so on) which it finds commercially viable. We are *not* proposing to ban by law the trivial and the vulgar, the escapist and the decadent—apart from the horrifying implications for liberty, we should hardly agree on what is trivial if we cannot even agree on what is pornographic! And we are *not* seeking an imposed “elevation” of popular taste; again, apart from the libertarian argument, any such attempt would create

¹⁸ We know, for example, that television significantly raised the level of political knowledge at the last election. And cannot the principle be observed at work in the steady increase in the circulation of the more serious newspapers (*The Times*, *Guardian*, *Observer*, *Sunday Times*, and *Telegraph*)?

¹⁹ The proposal for complete public ownership of the media (combined with syndicalist workers' control) is made by Mr. Raymond Williams in *Communications* (Penguin, 1962), p. 124. The patronising and school-prefect attitude to popular culture can be found in an extreme form in the Pilkington Report, which showed no interest in the opinions of ordinary viewers and listeners (any more than in those of sociologists) and indeed was imbued throughout with a condescending horror at the idea that people might actually like to watch trivial programmes.

mass desertions to the Voice of America and Radio Luxembourg, and the same obsession with “decadent” foreign culture which is now so evident in Soviet Russia. We are seeking solely to extend the range of choice beyond what is now offered.

Unfortunately, one sometimes becomes rather apprehensive. For many of those who are most anxious to reform the media, even to the point of wanting to nationalise the entire press, television, cinema and theatre, are not only inclined to be patronising in their attitude to present-day popular culture, but are also the most passionately wedded either to a “common” culture or at least to a particular view of culture.¹⁹ No democrat of course could countenance for a moment a state monopoly of all the media, such that the state alone had the totalitarian right to decide what persons and views were allowed access to the public—even in tolerant Britain Heaven knows how many minority views would be suppressed, as Sir Winston Churchill was kept off the air before the war, and criticism of the monarchy is virtually banned by the B.B.C. to-day.

But, state ownership apart, we do not want the media subjected to any particular unitary view of culture. Obviously, we would as socialists resist any attempt to impose the élite values of a minority “high” culture; though this is rather a remote threat in practice both because large elements of such a culture are not susceptible of mass diffusion, and because the cultural elitists themselves would no doubt refuse to soil their hands with the media! But we should equally oppose any attempt to foster from above a specifically Left-wing or “working-class” culture. This is not only because the recent fashionable examples of such cultures—whether the pastoral “organic community” nostalgically lamented by Messrs. Leavis and Thompson, or Mr. Raymond Williams’ “common culture,” or the “socialist realism” of Free Cinema and the Royal Court playwrights—provide a rather sparse artistic and intellectual fare. It is primarily on libertarian grounds.

THE WORKING-CLASS cultural tradition, for all its great historic virtues, is not wholly favourable to personal liberty. Mr. Williams rightly describes this tradition in terms of certain values—solidarity and community as opposed to the bourgeois values of service and individualism—which are embodied and sym-

bolised in "the collective democratic institution, whether in the trade unions, the co-operative movement, or a political party"; and this he sees as "the right basis for the organisation of any good society of the future."²⁰ Now quite apart from the difficulty of seeing where culture in the narrow sense fits in, there are serious dangers concealed in this approach. The values of solidarity, community, and even traditional neighbourliness may well threaten the opposite (and equally "socialist"!) values of freedom, autonomy, and critical revolt; as I personally hold the latter values higher, my instinct is strongly for Mr. Richard Wollheim's contrary picture of a plurality of co-existing cultures.²¹

Moreover, class-based *institutions*, with their inevitable fear of "contamination" and class "betrayal," may be extremely intolerant of dissent. And (as Mr. Williams himself recognises) the emphasis on working-class institutions may foster the idea of a self-contained, sectional, class sub-culture which isolates the workers from the rest of society. One thinks of the continental Socialist Parties in the 1920s, trying to encase the entire lives of the workers within a frame-

work of purely *socialist* sports' clubs, cultural centres, social institutions, youth groups, Sunday schools, party magazines and newspapers. This may sound attractive to some, but it has dangerous implications. For any attempt to create a conscious, all-embracing class ideology would not only threaten the Labour Movement by cutting it off from those new social groups, now rapidly growing, whose support is essential to winning power. It would even threaten democracy—by encouraging separatism, rigidity, and extremism, and discouraging the cross-pressures and flexibility on which a healthy party system must depend.²²

In any case, all these notions, with their authoritarian undertones—the more disquieting for being often unconscious—are irrelevant to the end in view. The object is simply to extend the range of choice available from the media, partly because this is now limited by monopoly and concentration, partly in order to encourage the evolution of taste and knowledge. Our aim should be the maximum degree of cultural pluralism and availability of different aesthetic goods.

²⁰ *Culture and Society* (Chatto & Windus, 1958); *The Long Revolution*, p. 302.

²¹ Cf. *Socialism and Culture* (Fabian Society, 1961). Though perhaps one should not take the threat of the "common culture" too seriously; for Mr. Williams's description of it (in *Culture and Society*), apart from the extreme ambiguity of the language, is so hedged about with balancing remarks and qualifications that the notion is almost robbed of any meaning.

Parenthetically, the belief that the "cultural two nations" are something to do with capitalism and the absence of public ownership could only be held by the incredibly insular British "Left." Most European countries, with the same pattern of ownership as ourselves, have a marked degree of common cultural background—whether judged by ability to communicate without uncase or condescension, or by the universal sense of a national cultural heritage. The division in Britain is due mainly to our educational system.

²² For a discussion of Socialist "parties of integration," cf. S. M. Lipset, *Political Man* (Doubleday, 1960), Ch. III. Such concepts have a natural attraction for intellectuals, who, themselves often (and naturally) rebellious and ill-integrated into society, seek to ally with or escape into other "outsider" groups. Part of the frustration amongst the intellectual Left to-day, as Hannah Arendt has pointed out, arises from the fact that this avenue of escape is largely closed once the working class has become incorporated into society. Hence the frequent attempts to identify with new "outsider" groups—beats, negroes, "White Negroes," or rebellious teenagers.

LET US, then, consider the media in turn with this aim in view.

First, the national Press. I do not share some popular views about the political power of the Press; moreover, there is a limit to the number of national papers which any country can economically support. Nevertheless the position in Britain to-day is extremely disquieting. The *News Chronicle* and *Daily Herald* were unable to compete despite circulations of well over a million—far more than enough to sustain a national newspaper in most other countries; we now have no popular Liberal daily and no certainty of a Labour daily in a few years' time; generally, with only four separately-controlled mass-circulation dailies, the range and variety of independent newspapers are below the requirements of a healthy democracy.

This high degree of concentration stems from the economics of the British newspaper industry. There are large technical economies of scale in newspaper production; and these are not offset at a certain point (as they often are in manufacturing) by diseconomies of large-scale management, since the basic function of editing is scarcely affected by size of circulation. And there are even larger advantages of scale on the selling side, since advertising revenue (which accounts

for a large part of total revenue) increases more than proportionately with sales; that is, for any given class of newspaper, the larger the circulation the more advertising space can be sold at a given price. Hence the high "break-even point" and the trend towards monopoly.

One remedy is an equalisation fund within the industry designed to make large circulations less profitable relative to smaller ones, and so to reduce the "break-even point." This could be achieved by imposing a tax on advertising revenue, graded according to circulation; that is, the higher the circulation, the higher the percentage rate of tax. Newspapers with a circulation below a certain level would be exempt; and the proceeds of the tax would be returned to the industry in the form of a flat-rate equalisation payment per copy sold up to a limit of (say) two million copies.²³

In addition, we need (as we do on other grounds) fresh legislation to enable the Government to examine and if necessary forbid any take-over, merger, or amalgamation which seriously restricts the degree of competition. In the case of newspapers I would go further, and give the Government power to unscramble *existing* concentrations—in particular, to compel the Mirror group to divest itself of Odhams and the *Daily Herald*. These measures together would effectively halt, and eventually reverse, the concentration of the Press.

BUT THERE ARE TWO other matters which concern the Press. The first touches the liberty of the subject. The more depraved and poisonous of the capitalist newspapers consider themselves free to pry into family grief, intrude into private lives, and indulge in malicious personal comment, to an extent which is unknown anywhere else in the world and horrifies visitors from more civilised countries.²⁴ The wretched victim has only one recourse—to complain to an anæmic Press Council, drawn from the industry itself, whose sole power is to issue ineffective rebukes. On grounds of individual liberty, general decency, and protection against callous bullies, there is an overwhelming case for creating a Press Council which is independent of the industry, has power at least to compel the correc-

tion of mis-statements, and speaks out in a rather harsher and more courageous voice against prying and persecution.

The other matter concerns the influence of advertisers on the content of newspapers. Evidently we cannot in general blame advertisers for the trivial content of the media, since some of the media have no connection with advertising; the film industry, for example, depends entirely on box-office receipts (plus government subsidies), and yet has been more timorous and conformist than other media which rely heavily on advertising revenue. Nevertheless, there might be an unhealthy influence in particular cases—as in American television, where the advertiser not only buys advertising time or space but also controls the contents of the accompanying programme; the remedy here is surely to adopt the British or Canadian system under which the advertiser has no say in production or editorial matters.

Advertisers may exert one indirect influence on the British Press—not on major editorial policy (as to which they could not care less if the paper's circulation is satisfactory), but in restraining free and critical comment on advertised goods. This occurs often with the more sycophantic trade Press, and occasionally with the national Press; though in the latter case it is due as much to a vague timorousness on the part of the media-controllers as to a ruthless policy of profit-maximisation—after all, the B.B.C., which has no advertising revenue, was years behind some commercial newspapers in quoting the results of independent consumer testing. The answer is to compel both television channels to put on regular programmes reporting the results of independent testing; this, together with a further growth in the testing organisations themselves, would gradually raise public interest to the point where the Press also was forced to provide or at least to quote genuinely critical comment on goods.

SECONDLY, the cinema.

Here again we have too little competition, mainly because two large firms (Rank and A.B.C.) control the only two national chains of cinemas. This duopoly poses a threat both to the remaining independent cinemas, which can obtain only the films rejected by the circuits, and still more to the range and variety of film production (already threatened by endemic financial difficulties). For since the two circuits

²³ A scheme along these lines was suggested to the Royal Commission on the Press by Messrs. Nicholas Kaldor and Robert Neild.

²⁴ Though these practices are not confined to the capitalist Press; the "profiles" and comment in some "Left-wing" weeklies are often equally obnoxious.

play safe in their choice of films, seeking always the largest possible audience, the independent producers have (as compared, say, with France and Italy) little outlet for a more serious or experimental range of films.

The financial difficulties have long been recognised in the internal equalisation levy by which producers are subsidised from the profits of the exhibitors. But since the levy is paid to producers in proportion to the box-office earnings of their films, it operates perversely to aid not the small or experimental producer, but the large one who sells safe commercial films to the circuits. We therefore need a change in the principle of the levy which (as with the earlier proposal for the Press) will make it relatively easier for the small producer to survive; and we again need government supervision over the degree of concentration both in production and exhibition.

THIRDLY, SOUND RADIO. As there appears to be no obvious need or demand for additional national services, we must seek more choice and variety through the development of local radio. This could fulfil an important democratic function in stimulating interest in civic affairs, broadcasting local news, encouraging local drama, music, and sport, and breaking the monopoly now often held by a single local newspaper. But such a genuinely local service would not be forthcoming from local *commercial* radio, whose fare would consist (as we can see from the U.S.) largely of advertising, disc-jockeys, and non-local networked material. Moreover, the local newspaper would either be driven to the wall by commercial competition for local advertising revenue, or protect itself by buying a stake in the radio station; in either case we should have a dangerous concentration of the local means of communication. Local radio must therefore be financed out of licence revenue and publicly operated—no doubt initially by the B.B.C., though we should search for alternative systems of local operation and control.

FOURTHLY, TELEVISION. The two existing channels (B.B.C. and commercial) should maintain a broadly popular balance of programmes, catering primarily though not solely for expressed majority tastes. I assume that we shall have two new channels in the next few years. Neither of these should be commercial; for commercial *competition* in television (as we can again see from the U.S.) inevitably has a lower-

ing effect on standards. A single commercial network is subject only to the non-commercial competition of the B.B.C.; it can therefore afford to put on minority programmes without the risk of losing audiences and advertising revenue to a commercial rival. If, however, it had a commercial rival, it would be compelled to seek the most popular programmes for fear of losing custom; and if it did put on an occasional serious programme, it would do so at the same time as its rival's serious programme, thus nullifying choice. The result would be a general debasement of standards with no increase, and probably a diminution, in the range of choice.

The new channels should therefore both be public. One should be complementary to the B.B.C. (though not necessarily operated by it, for we want to increase the choice of employment as well as of programmes) and financed out of licence revenue; it should be a third general channel, but deliberately biased towards minority, regional, cultural, and experimental programmes. The other should be a specialised educational and teaching channel under a new national authority. Its object would be not to usurp or diminish the quite different quasi-educational function (discussed above) of the general channels, but to alleviate the catastrophic forthcoming shortage of teachers and facilities in all forms of school and further education.

THESE changes will not provide an ideal solution. But there is no ideal solution to the problem of the media, for the sheer technical *scale* of operation limits the practicable amount of diversity and competition. Yet, taken together, they would significantly increase the range and variety of choice without in any way denying the democratic right either of private citizens to communicate, or of the majority to receive whatever entertainment or diversion it prefers.

But at the end of the day we must always remember that the problem arises largely because of our poor educational provision. If we had more education, we should not only be more critical and "propaganda-safe" and less susceptible to the wiles of the advertiser or tawdry journalist, but we should *insist* on higher cultural standards. We may take the contrast between Britain and the Scandinavian peoples. There is argument about the state of "high culture" in Scandinavia. But there is none about the enviably high level of popular taste, indus-

trial design, and beauty in everyday life. This is evident in the quality of mass-produced clothing and household goods, the furnishing of working-class homes, the fastidious insistence on good architecture and civic design, the serious quality of the newspapers, the high attendance at the non-commercial theatre, and the universal rejection of the shoddy, tasteless, and trivial. But the contrast has nothing to do with the mass media, which indeed it long pre-dated. It arises because the Scandinavians, unlike the British, *demand* high quality and a beautiful environment; and they do so partly because their standards of school and adult education are so high. If we had similar standards, many of the interventions would be superfluous.

We must also remember that writers, politicians, and intellectuals can do much to promote standards of excellence—by precept, example, and participation. Negatively, we can at least try to establish some minimum standards—by

²⁵ Especially if we are socialists; there is something degrading about the number of "Left-wing socialists" from *Tribune* who are now Beaverbrook employees.

refusing to write for large emoluments in the Beaverbrook Press,²⁵ by maintaining an honestly critical habit on radio or television, by declining to cavort for the sake of notoriety, and by abnegating the café-society irresponsibility so typical of much of the Left intelligentsia. Positively, we can (especially if we *talk* endlessly of engagement) actually engage ourselves in voluntary activities devoted to improving the quality of daily life—in civic societies, consumer groups, educational associations, the Viewers' and Listeners' Association, and many others. It may be that we are now witnessing a major breakthrough in this respect; but hitherto, at least, one reason for the low standards has been a certain abdication of responsibility on the part of the intelligentsia.

The media have their dangers, though they are far less sinister than most of the hypnotised critics think. But all too often we make them a scapegoat for deeper failings—for our national vices of philistinism and puritanism; for a deep-seated anti-Americanism; for our deplorable educational system; and, in the case of intellectuals, for personal failings of our own.

Beast of Burden

So "Let me help!" you twitter: and you make
Gingerly as if to . . . then, quick, you let me slump
Off-balance on the ground. And, "Why doesn't my back break?"
You complain, and you gawk at the great hang-dog hump
That bouldered all the door-jambs as I groped
Into your house. Why this grotesque back-lash
(You ask) I sweat so much to get roped,
Knotted onto me? Use a gully! Slash!
Well . . . would you really have me fling away
My millstone, stoneself, selfbreak counterpart?
Don't they bury men whose crime is felo-de-se
At those coloured lights? Drive a faggot through the heart?
Better look twice, hadn't you, at my pack,
See what it is drowsing on my back.

John Holloway

Taib Saleh

The Doum-tree of Wad Hamid

WERE YOU TO COME to our village as a tourist, it is likely, my son, that you would not stay long. If it were in winter-time, when the palm-trees are pollinated, you would find that a dark cloud had descended over the village. This, my son, would not be dust, nor yet that mist which rises up after rainfall. It would be a swarm of those sand-flies which block all approaches to those wishing to enter our village. You may well have seen this pest before, but I swear that you have never seen this particular species. Take this gauze netting, my son, and put it over your head. While it won't protect you against these devils, it will at least be of some help. I remember a friend of my son's, a fellow-student of his at school. A year ago, at just this time, my son invited him to stay with us, his people being from the town. He stayed one night and got up next day in a fever, with a running nose and swollen face, and swore that he wouldn't spend another night with us.

If you were to come to us in summer you would find horse-flies—enormous flies the size of spring lambs, as we say. In comparison, these sand-flies are a thousand times more bearable: they are savage flies, my son, they bite, sting, buzz and whirr. They have a special love for man and no sooner smell him out than they attach themselves to him.

Wave them off you, my son—God curse all sand-flies.

This story is by a young Sudanese writer and is translated from the Arabic by Denys Johnson-Davies.

And were you to come at a time which was neither summer nor winter you would find nothing at all. No doubt, my son, you read the papers daily, listen to the radio, and go to the cinema once or twice a week. Should you become ill you have the right to be treated in hospital, and if you have a son he is entitled to receive a school education. I know, my son, that you hate dark streets and like to see electric light shining out in the night. I know, too, that you are not enamoured of walking and that riding donkeys gives you a bruise on your backside. Oh, I wish, my son, I wish . . . the asphalted roads of the towns . . . modern means of transport . . . fine, comfortable buses . . . we have none of these things. We are people who live on what God sees fit to give us.

To-morrow you will depart from our village, of this I am sure, and you will be right to do so. What have you to do with such hardship? We are thick-skinned people and in this we differ from others. We have become used to this rough life, in fact we like it, but we ask no one to suffer its hardships. To-morrow you will depart, my son, I know that. Before you leave, though, let me show you one thing—something which, in a manner of speaking, we are proud of. In the towns you have museums, places in which local history and the great deeds of the past are preserved. This thing that I want to show you can be said to be a museum. It is the one thing which we insist that our visitors should see.

ONCE A PREACHER, sent by the government, came to stay with us for a month. He

arrived at a time when the horse-flies had never been fatter. On the very first day the man's face swelled up. He bore this manfully and joined us in evening prayers on the second night, and after prayers he talked to us of the delights of the primitive life. On the third day he was down with malaria, had contracted dysentery, and his eyes were completely bunged up. At noon I visited him and found him prostrate in bed with a boy standing at his head waving away the flies.

"O Sheikh," I said to him, "there is nothing in our village to show you, though I would like you to see the doum-tree of Wad Hamid." He didn't ask me what Wad Hamid's doum-tree was; I presumed, though, that he had heard of it, for who has not done so? He raised his face which was like the lung of a slaughtered cow; his eyes—as I mentioned—were firmly closed though I knew that behind the lashes there lurked a certain bitterness.

"By God," he said to me, "were this the doum-tree of Jandal, and were you the Moslems who fought with Ali and Mu'awiya, and were I the arbitrator between you, holding your fate in these two hands of mine, I wouldn't stir an inch," and he spat upon the ground as though to curse me and turned away his face. After that we heard that the Sheikh had cabled to those who had sent him saying: "The horse-flies have eaten into my neck, malaria has burnt up my skin, and dysentery has lodged itself in my bowels. Come to my rescue, may God bless you. These are people who are in no need of me or of any other preacher." And so the man departed and the government sent us no preacher after him.

But, my son, our village actually witnessed many great men of power and influence, people with names that rang through the country like drums, whom we never even dreamed would ever come here—they came, by God, in droves.

We have arrived. Have patience, my son, in a little while there will be the noonday breeze to lighten the agony of this pest upon your face.

Here it is—the doum-tree of Wad Hamid.

Look how it holds its head aloft to the skies; look how its roots strike down into the earth; look at its full, sturdy trunk, like the form of a comely woman, at the branches on high resembling the mane of a frolicsome steed! In the afternoon, at the incline of the sun, the doum-tree casts its shadow from this high mound right across the river so that someone sitting on the far bank can rest in its shade. At morning, when the sun rises, the shadow of the tree stretches across the cultivated land and houses right up to the cemetery. Do you not find that it is like some mythical eagle spreading its wings over the village and everyone in it? Once the government, wanting to put through an agricultural scheme, decided to cut it down: they said that the best place for setting up the pump was where the doum-tree stood. As you can see, the people of our village are solely concerned with their everyday needs and I cannot remember their ever having rebelled against anything. However, when they heard about cutting down the doum-tree they all rose up as one man and barred the district commissioner's way. This was in the time of foreign rule. The flies assisted them too—the horse-flies. The man was surrounded by the clamouring people shouting that if the doum-tree were cut down they would fight the government to the last man, while the flies played havoc with the man's face. As his papers were scattered in the water we heard him cry out: "All right... doum-tree stay... scheme no stay." And so neither the pump nor the scheme came about and we kept our doum-tree.

Let us go home, my son, for this is no time for talking in the open. This hour just before sunset is a time when the army of sand-flies becomes particularly active prior to going to sleep. At such a time no one who isn't well-accustomed to them and has become as thick-skinned as us can bear their stings. Look at it, my son, look at the doum-tree: lofty, proud, and haughty as though... as though it were some ancient idol. Wherever you happen to be in the village you can see it... in fact, you can see it even from four villages away.

To-morrow you will depart from our village, of that there is no doubt, the mementos of the short walk we have taken visible upon your face, neck, and hands. However, before you leave I shall complete the story of the tree, the doum-tree of Wad Hamid. Enter, my son, treat this house as your own.

YOU ASK who planted the doum-tree? No one planted it, my son. Is the ground in which it grows arable land? Do you not see that it is stony and appreciably higher than the river bank, like the pedestal of a statue, while the river twists and turns below it like a sacred snake, one of the ancient gods of the Egyptians? My son, no one planted it. Drink your tea, my son, for you must be in need of it after the severe experience you have undergone. . . . Most probably it grew up by itself, though no one remembers having known it other than as you now find it. Our sons opened their eyes to find it commanding the village. And we, when we take ourselves back to childhood memories, to that dividing line beyond which we remember nothing, see in our minds a giant doum-tree standing on a river bank; everything beyond it is like that faded light which is not dawn but the light directly preceding the break of dawn. My son, do you find that you can follow what I say? Are you aware of this feeling I have in my mind but which I am powerless to express? Every new generation finds the doum-tree as though the tree had been born with their birth and would grow up with them. Go and sit with the people of this village and listen to them recounting their dreams. A man awakens from sleep and tells his neighbour how he found himself in a vast sandy track, the sand as white as pure silver, of how his feet sank in as he walked so that only with difficulty could he draw them out again, of how he walked and walked until he was overcome with thirst and stricken with hunger, while the sands stretched endlessly around him; of how he climbed a hill and on reaching its peak espied a dense forest of doum-trees in the midst of which was one single tall tree which in comparison

with the others looked like a camel among a flock of goats; of how the man descended the hill to find that the earth seemed to be rolled up before him so that it was but a step, a second and a third before he found himself under the doum-tree of Wad Hamid; of how he then discovered a vessel containing milk, its surface still fresh with froth, and of how, though he drank until he was quenched, the milk was in no wise lessened. At which his neighbour says to him: "Rejoice at release from your troubles."

You can also hear women saying to their friends: "It was as though I were in a boat sailing through a channel in the sea, so narrow that I could stretch out my hands and touch the shore on either side. I found myself on the crest of a mountainous wave which carried me upwards till I was almost touching the clouds then bore me down into a dark, fathomless pit. I began shouting in my fear, but it was as though my voice were trapped in my throat. Suddenly I found the channel opening out a little. I saw that on the two shores were black, leafless trees with thorns, the tips of which were like the heads of hawks. I saw the two shores closing in upon me and the trees seemed to be walking towards me. I was filled with terror and called out at the top of my voice: "O Wad Hamid!" As I looked I saw a man with radiant face and heavy white beard flowing down over his chest, dressed in spotless white and holding a string of amber prayer-beads. Placing his hand on my brow he said: "Be not afraid," and I was calmed. Then I found the shore opening up and the water flowing gently. I looked to my left and saw fields of ripe corn, water-wheels turning, and cattle grazing, and on the shore stood the doum-tree of Wad Hamid. The boat came to rest under the tree and the man stepped out before me, tied up the boat, and stretched out his hand to me. He then struck me gently on the shoulder with the string of beads and taking up a doum-fruit from the ground he placed it in my hand. When I turned round he was no longer there." Her friend then says to her: "That was Wad Hamid. . . . You will have an illness that will bring you to

the brink of death but you will recover from it. You must make an offering to Wad Hamid, under the doum-tree."

So it is, my son, that there is not a man or woman, young or old, who dreams at night without seeing the doum-tree of Wad Hamid at some point in his dream.

You ask me why it was called the doum-tree of Wad Hamid and who Wad Hamid was. Be patient, my son . . . have another cup of tea.

At the beginning of home rule an employee in the government came to inform us that the government was intending to set up a stopping-place for the steamer. He told us that the national government wished to help us and to see us progress, and his face was radiant with enthusiasm as he talked. He saw, however, that the faces around him expressed no reaction. My son, we are not people who travel very much and when we wish to do so for some important matter such as registering land or seeking advice about a matter of divorce, we take a morning's ride on our donkeys and then board the steamer from the neighbouring village. My son, we have grown accustomed to this, in fact it is for precisely this reason that we breed donkeys. It is little wonder, then, that the government official discerned nothing in the people's faces to indicate that they were pleased with the news. The government official's enthusiasm waned and, being at his wit's end, he began fumbling for words. After a period of silence someone asked him: "Where will the stopping-place be?" To which the official replied that there was only one suitable place—where the doum-tree stood. Had you that instant brought along a woman and had her stand amidst those men as naked as the day her mother bore her, their amazement would have been no greater than that occasioned by this phrase. One of the men hastily replied to the official: "The steamer usually passes here on a Wednesday. If you made a stopping-place, then it would be here on Wednesday afternoon." The official replied that the time fixed for the steamer to stop over at their village would be four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon.

"But that," answered the man, "is the time when we visit the tomb of Wad Hamid at the doum-tree, when we take our women and children and make offerings. We do this every week." The official replied laughingly: "Then change the day." Had the official told these men at that moment that every one of them was a bastard, they would not have been more angered than by this remark of his. They rose up as one man, bore down upon him, and would certainly have killed him had I not intervened and snatched him from their clutches. I then put him on a donkey and told him to make good his escape. And so it was that the steamer still does not stop here and that we still, when circumstances require us to travel, ride off on our donkeys for a whole morning and take the steamer from the neighbouring village. We content ourselves with the thought that we visit the tomb of Wad Hamid with our women and children and that, as our fathers and fathers' fathers did before us, we make offerings there every Wednesday.

EXCUSE ME, my son, while I perform the sunset prayer . . . it is said that the sunset prayer is "strange": if you don't catch it in time it eludes you. . . . "God's pious servants . . . I declare that there is no God but God and I declare that Mohammed is His Servant and His Prophet. . . . Peace be upon you and the mercy of God."

Ah, ah. For a week this back of mine's been paining me. What do you think it is, my son? I know, though, it's just old age. . . . O for youth! . . . In my young days I would breakfast off half a sheep, drink the milk of five cows for supper, and be able to lift a sack of dates with one hand. He lies who says he ever beat me at wrestling. They used to call me "the crocodile." Once I swam the river using my chest to push a boat loaded with wheat to the other shore . . . at night! On the shore were some men at work at their water-wheels, who, when they saw me pushing the boat towards them, threw down their clothes in terror and fled. "O people," I shouted at them, "what's wrong, shame upon you! Don't you know me? I'm 'the

crocodile.' My God, the devils themselves would be scared off by your ugly faces."

MY SON, have you asked me what we do when we're ill?

I laugh because I know what's going on in your head. . . . You townsfolk hurry to the hospital at the slightest pretext. If one of you hurts his finger he dashes off to the doctor who puts it into a bandage for him and he carries it in a sling for days; and even then it doesn't get better. Once I was working in the fields and something bit my finger—this little finger of mine. I jumped to my feet and looked around in the grass where I found a snake lurking. I swear to you it was longer than my arm. I took hold of it by the head and crushed it between my two fingers, then bit into my finger, sucked out the blood, and took up a handful of dust and rubbed it over.

But this is a small matter. What do we do when faced with real illness?

This neighbour of ours, now. . . . One day her neck swelled up and she was confined to bed for two months. During the night she had a heavy fever so at first dawn she rose from her bed and dragged herself along till she came. . . . yes, my son, till she came to the doum-tree of Wad Hamid. The woman related what happened. "I was under the doum-tree," she said, "with hardly sufficient strength to stand up, and called out at the top of my voice: 'O Wad Hamid, I have come to you to seek refuge and protection. . . . I shall sleep here at your tomb and under your doum-tree. Either you let me die or you restore me to life; I shall not leave here until one of these two things happens.' And so I curled myself up in fear," continued the woman in her story, "and was soon overcome by sleep. While midway between wakefulness and sleep I suddenly heard sounds of recitation from the Koran and a bright light, as sharp as a knife-edge, radiated out, joining up the two river banks, and I saw the doum-tree prostrating itself in worship. My heart throbbed so violently that I thought it would leap up through my

mouth. I saw a venerable old man with a white beard and wearing a spotless white robe approaching me, a smile on his face. He struck me on the head with his string of prayer-beads and called out: 'Arise.' I swear that I rose up not knowing how I had done so and came home I know not how. I arrived back at dawn and woke up my husband, my son and daughters. I told my husband to light the fire and make tea, then ordered my daughters to utter shrill ululations of joy, and the whole village descended upon us. I swear that I was never again afraid, nor yet ill."

Yes, my son, we are a people who have no experience of hospitals. In small matters such as the bites of scorpions, fever, sprains, and fractures, we take to our beds until we are cured. When in serious trouble we go to the doum-tree.

SHALL I TELL you the story of Wad Hamid, my son, or would you like to sleep? Town folk don't go to sleep till late at night—I know that of them. We, though, go to sleep directly the birds are silent, the flies stop harrying the cattle, the leaves of the trees settle down, the hens spread their wings over their chicks and the goats turn on their sides to chew the cud of the fodder collected during the day. We and our animals are alike, we rise in the morning when they rise and go to sleep when they sleep, our breathing and theirs following one and the same preconceived design.

My father, reporting what my grandfather had told him, said: "Wad Hamid in former times was the slave of a wicked man. He was one of God's holy saints but kept his faith to himself, not daring to pray openly lest his wicked master should kill him. When he could no longer bear his life with this infidel he called upon God to deliver him and a voice called out to him to spread his prayer-carpet on the water and that when it stopped by the shore he should descend. The prayer-carpet put him down at the spot where the doum-tree is now and which used to be waste land. And there he stayed alone, praying the

whole day. At nightfall a man came to him with dishes of food, so he ate and continued his worship till the break of dawn. All this took place before the village was built up. It is as though this village, with its inhabitants, its water-wheels and buildings, had become split off from the earth. Anyone who tells you he knows the history of its origin is a liar. Other places begin small and then grow larger, but this village of ours sprang up at one bound. Its population neither increases nor decreases, while its appearance remains unchanged. And ever since our village existed so has the doum-tree of Wad Hamid; and in the same way no one remembers how it originated, how the doum-tree came to grow in a patch of rocky ground by the river, standing above it like a sentinel.

When I took you to visit it, do you remember, my son, the iron railing round it? Do you remember the marble plaque standing on a stone pedestal with *The doum-tree of Wad Hamid* written on it? Do you remember the doum-tree with the gilded crescents above the tomb? They are the only new things about the village since God first planted it here, and the story of all this I shall now recount to you.

When you travel away to-morrow—and you will certainly do so, swollen of face and inflamed of eye—it will be fitting if you do not curse it but, rather, think boldly of us and of the things that I have told you this night, for you may well find that your visit to us was not wholly bad.

YOU REMEMBER that some years ago we had members of Parliament and political parties and a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing which we couldn't make head or tail of. The roads would sometimes cast down strangers at our very doors just as the waves of the sea wash up strange weeds. Though not a single one of them prolonged his stay beyond one night, they would nevertheless bring us the news of the great fuss going on in the capital. One day they told us that the government which had driven out imperialism had been substituted by another govern-

ment possessed of even more members and clamour. "And who has changed it?" we asked of them, but received no answer. As for us, ever since we refused to allow the stopping-place to be set up at the doum-tree no one had disturbed our tranquil existence. Two years passed without our knowing what form the government had taken, black or white. Its emissaries passed through our village without staying in it, while we thanked God that He had saved us the trouble of putting them up. So things went on till, four years ago, a new government replaced the first one. As though this new authority wished to make us conscious of its presence, we awoke one day to find an official with an enormous hat and small head, in the company of two soldiers, measuring up and doing calculations at the doum-tree. We asked them what it was about, to which they replied that the government wished to build a stopping-place for the steamer under the doum-tree.

"But we have already given you our answer about that," we told them. "What makes you think we'll accept it now?"

"The government," they said, "which gave in to you was a weak one, but the position has now changed."

To cut a long story short, we took them by the scruffs of their necks, hurled them into the water, then went off to our work. It wasn't more than a week later when a posse of troops came along commanded by the small-headed official with the large hat, who called out to them: "Arrest that man, and that one, and that one," until they'd taken off twenty of us, I among them. We spent a month in prison, then one day the very soldiers who had put us there opened the prison gates. We asked them what it was all about but no one said anything. Outside the prison we found a great gathering of people; no sooner were we spotted than there were shouts and cheering and we were embraced by some cleanly-dressed people, heavily scented and with gold watches gleaming on their wrists. They carried us off in a great procession, back to our own folk. There we found an unbelievably immense

crowd of people, carts, horses, and camels. We said to each other: "The din and flurry of the capital has caught up with us." They made us twenty men stand in a row and the people passed along it shaking us by the hand: The Prime Minister... the President of the Parliament... the President of the Senate... the member for such and such constituency... the member for such and such other constituency. We looked at each other without understanding a thing of what was going on around us except that our arms were aching with all the handclaps we had been receiving from those presidents and members of Parliament. They then took us off in a great concourse to the place where the doum-tree and the tomb stand. The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the monument you've seen, and for the dome you've seen, and for the railing you've seen. In the same manner as a tornado blows up for a while then departs, so that mighty host disappeared as suddenly as it had come without spending a night in the village—no doubt because of the horse-flies which, that particular year, were as large and fat and buzzed and whirred as much as during the year the preacher came to us.

One of those strangers who were cast upon us in the village by the highways and byways later told us the story of all this fuss and bother.

"The people," he said, "hadn't been happy about this government since it came to power, for they knew that it had only come in by buying a number of the members of Parliament. They therefore bided their time and waited for the right opportunities to present themselves, while the opposition looked around for something to spark things off. When the doum-tree incident occurred and they took you all off and slung you into prison, the newspapers published the news and the leader of the government which had resigned made a fiery speech in Parliament in which he said: 'To such tyranny has this government come that it has begun to interfere in the beliefs of the people, in those holy things held most sacred by them.' Then, taking a most imposing stance and in a voice

choked with emotion, he said: 'Ask our worthy Prime Minister about the doum-tree of Wad Hamid! Ask him how it was that he permitted himself to send his troops and henchmen to desecrate that pure and holy place!'

"The people took up the cry and throughout the country their hearts responded to the incident of the doum-tree as to nothing before. Perhaps the reason is that in every village in this country there is some monument like the doum-tree of Wad Hamid which people see in their dreams. After a month of fuss and shouting and inflamed feelings, fifty members of the government were forced to withdraw their support, their constituencies having warned them that unless they did so they would wash their hands of them. And so the government fell, the first government returned to power and the leading paper in the country wrote: 'The doum-tree of Wad Hamid has become the symbol of the nation's awakening.'..."

Since that day we have been unaware of the existence of the new government and not one of those great giants of men who visited us has put in an appearance, and we thanked God that He spared us the trouble of having to shake them by the hand. Our life returned to what it had been: no water-pump, no agricultural project, no stopping-place for the steamer. Yet we retained our doum-tree which casts its shadow over the southern bank in the afternoon and which, in the morning, spreads its shadow over the fields and houses right up to the cemetery, with the river flowing below it like some sacred snake of legend. Our village has, however, acquired a marble monument, an iron railing, and a dome with gilded crescents.

WHEN the man had finished what he had to say he looked at me with an enigmatic smile playing at the corners of his mouth like the faint flickerings of a lamp.

"And when," I asked, "will they set up the water-pump and put through the agricultural project and the stopping-place for the steamer?"

He lowered his head for a short while

before answering me: "When people go to sleep and don't see the doum-tree in their dreams."

"And when will that be?" I said, to which he replied: "I mentioned to you that my son is in the town studying at school. It wasn't I who put him there; he ran away and went there on his own, and it is my hope that he will stay where he is and not return. When my son's son passes out of school and the number of young men with souls foreign to our own increases, then perhaps the water-pump will be set up and the agricultural project put into being... maybe then the steamer will stop at our village... under the doum-tree of Wad Hamid."

"And do you think," I said to him, "that the doum-tree will one day be cut down?" He looked at me for a long while as though

wishing to project, through his tired, misty eyes, something which he was incapable of doing by word. "There will not be the least necessity for cutting down the doum-tree. There is not the slightest reason for the tomb to be removed. What all these people have overlooked is that there's plenty of room for all these things: plenty of room for the doum-tree, the tomb, the water-pump, and the steamer's stopping-place."

When he had been silent for a time he gave me a look which I don't know how to describe though it stirred within me a feeling of sadness, sadness for some obscure thing which I was unable to define. Then he said: "To-morrow you will without doubt be leaving us. When you arrive at your destination, think well of us and judge us not too harshly."

April and the Ideas-Merchant

I was plying my trade in the street,
It was a rainy agate twilight
And my eyes were half lid . . . but my town-bred soul
Was tempted and within an inch of giving in.

I was at work upon a suburb of my brain,
An ultra-treacherous idea was in its private room there
And I was closing in—with the ink streaming off my brow!
But my soul attentive to the agate oxygen.

Crates of glass and water had been dumped down by the weather,
Overhead a last skylight opened in the Koh-i-noor,
—A whole civilisation was loose, bully and vixen
Moving along, roasting hot, ready for anything!

And—odium—I was in the chien-loup
Of the Latin Quarter of my brain
Where certain dark yellow hours go by
. . . that lead off surreptitiously into eternity.

Academic! Hack! Vulgarian!
You mistook the nature of your calling. Poets are only at work,
With an agate daylight going through the street,
When they live, dream, bleed—within an inch of giving in to art.

Rosemary Tonks

Lewis S. Feuer

Marxian Tragedians

A Death in the Family

EVERY movement lives on a hope; it offers its adherents a way of life, a path to happiness. And every movement likes to repress those incidents which cast doubt on its ability to bring happiness to its communicants. For a movement never lives only in the future, and its kingdom is always partially of this world. To participate in a movement here and now, to partake of its glimpse of the new world, is supposed to transmute the human character, and to alter present man into the semblance of those to come. An unregenerate, unredeemed member brings a self-doubt which the movement would prefer to forget. Such was the problem of evil which the lives of Karl Marx's daughter, Eleanor, and her lover, Edward Aveling, posed for the socialist universe. The official annals of Marxism usually pass them by.

Eleanor Marx was the youngest of her father's children. She was born to him shortly before the son, Edgar, died, and she became the supreme consolation to the sorrowing father. "Tussy," she was called, and though the household was poverty-haunted, she grew to be "a merry little thing, as round as a ball and like cream and roses." Karl Marx came to feel at one with his daughter. "Tussy is me," he said in later years. He told her never-ending fairy tales in which he projected his own character as a maker of history into that of a make-believe hero. To the listening child, the father could

speaking his innermost heart. One such story which "went on for months and months" was about "Hans Röckle . . . a Hoffmann-like magician, who kept a toyshop, and who was always 'hard-up.'" In short, he was Marx himself. "His shop was full of the most wonderful things—of wooden men and women, giants and dwarfs, kings and queens, workmen and masters," precisely as Marx's *Capital* and materialist conception of history. And Hans, like his progenitor, "could never meet his obligations either to the devil or the butcher, and was therefore—much against the grain—constantly obliged to sell his toys to the devil." The toys went through horrendous adventures, but finally ended happily in Hans' shop. The ordeals of history had their triumphant culmination.

Father and daughter revelled in romantic novels. Together they read Marryat, Cooper, and above all, Walter Scott. There was literally a "Scott mania" in the Marx household; the leader of the international working-class movement immersed himself in tales of feudal lords and ladies, and Scottish clans and chiefs. Eleanor was perturbed to learn that she was descended, on her mother's side, from the hated Campbells. Nonetheless, she and Karl Marx plotted to rouse the Highlanders once again in a mighty uprising. Meanwhile, Eleanor played and wrestled with the neighbourhood boys in the street. For years she could not be persuaded to go to school. Her father himself taught her how to read. Eleanor would listen attentively to the grown-ups talking about the Civil War in America; then she would sit down and write letters of encouragement to Abraham Lincoln.

Like many an atheist father, Karl Marx found that his little daughter did not grow naturally into a simple rationalist. Eleanor, at the age of

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five or six, was experiencing religious longings: she had been moved by the beautiful music in a Roman Catholic church. She took her questions to her father, who put her firmly aright. "He quietly made everything clear and straight, so that from that hour to this," wrote Eleanor Marx, "no doubt would ever cross my mind again." Her father told her the Gospel in historical materialist version, the story "of the carpenter whom the rich men killed." The daughter remembered, too, his saying often: "After all, we can forgive Christianity much, because it taught us the worship of the child." Eleanor identified herself with her father's ideas and activities. She worshipped him, and she reproached herself later with his memory: "I shall never be good and unselfish as he was. I am *not* good—never shall be, though I try..."¹

But something in Eleanor remained restless and unstilled in the socialist household. There were strange tensions between the mother and daughter, between the daughter and father. "My mother and I loved each other passionately," wrote Eleanor to Olive Schreiner, "but she did not know me as Father did. One of the bitterest of many bitter sorrows of my life is that my mother died thinking, despite all our love, that I had been hard and cruel, and never guessing that to save her and Father sorrow I had sacrificed the best, freshest years of my life. But Father," she continued, "though he did not *know* till just before the end, felt he must trust me—our natures were so exactly alike!" Some darkness intervened even in Eleanor's love for her father; it left her with an abiding weakness and a craving for support. "If you had ever been in our home," she wrote, "if you had ever seen my Father and Mother, known what *he* was to me, you would understand better both my yearning for love, given and received, and

my intense need of sympathy. Of my father I was so sure! For long miserable years there was a shadow between us—I must tell you the whole story some day—yet our love was always the same."² Her father's love, however, was of the kind which left Eleanor without confidence in herself. Despite her knowledge, zest for hard work, and vivid style, she was content to serve others as a hack assistant. She had to be urged to write her short articles for the socialist press.

ELEANOR gave herself to the socialist movement as none of Marx's other daughters did. She wrote, agitated, and translated. She was scarcely twenty when she finished her version of Lissagaray's *History of the Paris Commune of 1871*; her father dutifully revised and corrected her translation and made it their joint work. She translated at socialist congresses, perhaps even mistranslating when opponents of her father's doctrine spoke. She worked hard with Will Thorne to organise the gas workers during the wave of the New Unionism, and led the strike of the women at Silvertown. "Tussy is the leader of the gas workers (on the sly)," wrote Engels proudly. She was among the leaders of the epoch-making London Dockers' Strike of 1889. And in 1890 she helped organise the first International May Day demonstration in London on behalf of the eight-hour day. A month before she died, Eleanor was proud and joyous with a gift the Miners' Union had sent her—a fountain pen and case, by way of thanks for her voluntary service as translator at the International Miners' Congress.

The theatre, however, was Eleanor Marx's great love. She wanted to become an actress, and took dramatic lessons, but Karl Marx begrudged his daughter's ambition. He complained to Engels that "the child is suffering from a mental discord which is quite undermining her health," that she was not frank, and was not confiding in him. "The child" was already in her twenty-sixth year, and "burning with eagerness" for an "independent career as an artist." Marx, however, wished Eleanor to be more like her mother, Jenny, who had been a model of self-effacing domesticity. There had been no revolutionary women in the German working-men's clubs which he and Engels had led. Eleanor unfortunately insisted upon applying Marx's words to the cause of women's emancipation: she was a New Woman, and Marx evidently was uneasy with this phenomenon.

¹ Especially illuminating on her childhood is a volume recently published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, entitled *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, which brings together much significant material, including several essays previously unavailable. The book has such articles as Eleanor Marx Aveling on "Karl Marx," and "Remarks on a Letter by the Young Marx;" Edward Aveling on "Engels at Home;" Franzisca Kugelmann, "Small Traits of Marx's Great Character;" Friedrich Lessner, "Before 1848 and After."

² *The Letters of Olive Schreiner, 1876-1920*, edited by S. C. Cronwright-Schreiner, and the biographies of Olive Schreiner by Daisy Lucie Hobman and Vera Buchanan-Gould.

Eleanor could at least work ardently in amateur theatricals. Engels saw her act in 1881, and thought she "was very good in the emotional scenes." He gathered she was taking Ellen Terry as her model, but trusted she would soon develop her own style. Eleanor acted and recited before all sorts of working-men's groups. She stirred one audience, gathered to help a Communard widow, with her rendition of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. When she lectured to the Playgoer's Club on naturalism in the modern drama, a critic said that not until he had listened to Eleanor had he realised "of what noble beauty the English language is capable."

Ibsen's plays most enraptured Eleanor Marx. When *A Doll's House* was first produced in England in 1884, it had the impact of an epochal manifesto calling on restive women to rise to end their immemorial enslavement. Outside the theatre, after the first performance, a group of young women talked excitedly about the meaning of the play as harbinger to a new era: Olive Schreiner (authoress of *The Story of an African Farm*) and Eleanor Marx were among them. A generation of young women prepared to shatter their doll's houses. Eleanor, too, was ready to live by the new gospel. Her mother, father, and a sister had all died within the last three years. Karl Marx might have stopped short this nonsense of a rival, petty-bourgeois prophet. Eleanor, living alone, embraced the new creed: was it not the corollary of all her father's writings? She left her doll's house to enter a dungeon of deceptions.

ELEANOR MARX henceforth lived and breathed Ibsen. She translated *An Enemy of the People*, *The Lady from the Sea*, and *The Wild Duck*. The Ibsen Reading Club was a reality in 1885, and Eleanor saw a great deal of Bernard Shaw there.³ Several years later he lampooned the young Ibsenite men and women in *The Philanderer*, but during this Ibsenite phase, Shaw joined Eleanor and Edward Aveling in drawing-room readings and performances of Ibsen's plays. On one such

occasion, Eleanor read Nora's lines, Aveling took Helmer's part, while Shaw was Krogstad. He even acted with Eleanor in her theatricals for working-men's clubs. At these readings, wrote Eleanor,

we want to have only people who we know do love and understand Ibsen already, or those who will love and understand him, and who in turn will go on preaching him to others.

The young Ibsenite women tried hard, indeed, to be unwomanly. They cultivated a new standard of frankness in speaking about the details of their sexual feelings; they were done with the prudery which was the guise of women's inferiority. Olive Schreiner wrote to the enquiring Havelock Ellis in 1884 that she and Eleanor Marx both had their "most wonderful mental activity" towards the end and just after their menstrual periods. She spoke of the co-extensive power of the mental-sexual and physical-sexual. The scholar, A. H. Bullen, was shocked by the freedom with which Eleanor discussed "the less decorous aspect" of the Elizabethan drama. Both Olive and Eleanor suffered from a variety of ailments in the stomach and chest; rebellion took its toll of the New Women in all manner of neurotic symptoms. Olive thought Eleanor might tell Ellis about her experiences so that he could use them in an article for a medical journal.⁴

The uncompromising personal rebellion in Eleanor Marx alienated a person such as Beatrice Webb (then Beatrice Potter), searching her way among London's poor and social movements. They met one afternoon in 1883 in the British Museum's refreshment-room. Beatrice was repelled by Eleanor's blunt rejection of Christianity as an "immoral illusion" and her view of Jesus as a weak-minded, unheroic individual. Beatrice was a novice in social science, and Eleanor impressed her with that fact. In her diary, Beatrice Potter wrote her impressions of this first scientific socialist she had met:

In her person she is comely, dressed in a slovenly picturesque way, with curly black hair flying in all directions. Fine eyes full of life and sympathy, otherwise ugly features and expression, and complexion showing the signs of an unhealthy excited life, kept up with stimulants and tempered by narcotics. Lives alone, is much connected with Bradlaugh set. . . .

The young Havelock Ellis, however, found Eleanor Marx quite different. They took long walks together during a week in the country, and Ellis wrote: "I have never known a woman

³ For details of this friendship, see Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw*. (New York, 1956.)

⁴ There is an important memoir by Havelock Ellis, "Eleanor Marx," *Modern Monthly*, Vol. IX, September, 1935, pp. 283-295. Felix Barker gives valuable information in "Department of Amplification," *The New Yorker*, November 27, 1954 (pp. 190-199).

who on a long summer's day ramble diffused so potent an axillary fragrance." Ellis' impressions, recorded in a language of medical romanticism, are in keeping with the photograph of Eleanor, with warm lustrous eyes, and a face modelled in sincerity. Small wonder that Shaw in those days felt himself attracted to her, for Eleanor was a woman unlike the drab females he had known, a woman transfigured by a cause.⁵ Eleanor was living alone, but not for long. The cause could enclose one with evil too; it tied her life to Edward Aveling.

TO ELEANOR MARX, agitated with the cause of women's emancipation, brooding over the death of mother, father, and sister, Edward Aveling appeared as a socialist knight in her distress. Aveling had met Karl Marx just once, but the old man had after a fashion given him his blessing. The occasion was a lecture which Aveling was giving to the children of the Orphan Working School on "Insects and Flowers." "When the lecture was over," Aveling remembered, "an old gentleman with a very leonine head, together with a lady and young girl, came up and introduced themselves to me." They were Karl Marx, his wife, and their daughter Eleanor. The gentleman gave Aveling "words of too generous appreciation and encouragement. . . ."

Edward Aveling, then barely thirty, already had an academic career behind him. He was making his living as a scientific journalist, textbook writer, and private tutor in the sciences. He had once been a professor at the London Hospital and the University of London, from which he had received a doctorate; a new career, however, opened to him when he became the tutor in science to the daughters of Charles Bradlaugh, who was battering at the doors of Parliament for admission as its first avowed atheist member. The religion of science had burst with full force on the London public. Working-men, shopkeepers, and clerks were

learning geology, chemistry and palaeontology, and watching demonstrations and experiments with all the fervour that once had gone into observing the rituals of transubstantiation. Even old Marx was captivated by the new creed, and wended his way to lectures by Huxley and Tyndall. Edward Aveling was soon called upon to teach science to Bradlaugh's co-worker, the lovely Annie Besant, the most powerful woman orator in Britain, its acknowledged atheist martyr, who had had her children torn from her by a vindictive English court. Aveling taught Annie Besant science, and she led him into the ranks of Freethought. He became a prolific author of tracts for the secularist movement; among them were such titles as *A Godless Life the Happiest and Most Useful, God Dies: Nature Remains, The Wickedness of God, Irreligion of Science, and Why I dare not be a Christian*. Soon Aveling was also writing passionate passages in rationalist journals concerning the loveliness of Annie's face, form, and mind, and announcing that "she shall be the sole mistress of my life." He wrote the creed of the secular missionary:

To us, the most intense form of affection conceivable would be between a man and a woman who both believed fully in the happier future of humanity and were both toiling to bring about that desired end.⁶

During 1882, however, Aveling began to frequent the reading-room of the British Museum. Until then, as Annie Besant said, he had never uttered a word on socialism but now he "fell into company of some of the Bohemian Socialists" who gathered there, notably Eleanor Marx and Bernard Shaw. Aveling's intellectual history was written in sexual terms. He was a secularist when he was Annie Besant's lover; he became a socialist under Eleanor Marx's ægis. When Karl Marx was posthumously attacked, Aveling came to his defence in the free-thinking organ *Progress*. Eleanor Marx was immensely grateful; she became Aveling's editorial assistant.

Edward Aveling was beyond doubt the most bizarre person who ever joined the socialists. His appearance was forbidding. "Nobody can be so bad as Aveling looks," it was said. Repulsive though he was, he claimed to need but a half-hour's start of the handsomest man in London to achieve his conquest. A strange evil emanated from his presence, as from a diabolical source of being. Olive Schreiner, after hearing

⁵ In the literature of the socialist movement, see: Eduard Bernstein, *My Years of Exile* (translated by Bernard Miall, London, 1921); H. M. Hyndman, *Further Reminiscences* (London, 1912); Max Beer, *Fifty Years of International Socialism* (London, 1935); Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Karl Marx: Biographical Memoirs* (translated by Ernest Untermann, Chicago, 1901); Beatrice Webb, *My Apprenticeship* (Penguin, 1938).

⁶ See Gertrude Marvin Williams, *The Passionate Pilgrim: A Life of Annie Besant* (New York, 1931).

him read *Ghosts* at the Ibsen Club, wrote: "I am beginning to have such a horror of Dr. A. . . . To say I dislike him doesn't express it all; I have a fear and horror of him when I am near. Every time I see him this shrinking grows stronger." Five years later, her horror of Aveling had grown so intense, she wrote, that it "does more to cripple my power of life and work, than all the close personal sorrows of my life."

With jealousy's agony, Annie Besant watched Edward Aveling making his transition from secularism to socialism, from herself to Eleanor Marx. She engaged Eleanor in a public controversy, allegedly over atheism, but more clearly for the claim to Edward Aveling. Annie hated Eleanor all the more as Marx's daughter jibed stridently that atheism was an outmoded bourgeois creed, and that henceforth socialism was labour's philosophy. Annie read the rejection of organised atheism as the rejection of herself. She finally came to the point by publicly accusing Eleanor Marx in her weekly column in *The National Reformer* of having invented "a gross and scandalous libel on Dr. Edward Aveling," thereby bringing discord into the ranks of Free-thought, and giving aid and comfort to "the Christian foe." Soon, however, the sorrowing Annie took solace in evening duets with Bernard Shaw, who had lost Eleanor as Annie had Edward. With Shaw's help, Annie Besant began her sojourn in Fabian Socialism, a brief episode in her celebrated pilgrim's progress to theosophy.

Was there any libel of which Edward Aveling was innocent? He remained cheerfully indifferent to women's rights now that Eleanor's love shone upon him. He gave to *Progress* a socialist direction, and burst into song:

*The trill of a lark; the sound of a sea;
The voice of a maid; a man's heart strife;
Green grass growing on a salt-tossed lea;
Strong hopes growing in a storm-tossed life.*

There was a hollow Shelleyan echo in Aveling's verse. Indeed, the two lovers thought Shelley was the poet-spokesman of the full freedom of men and women. They brought to the Shelley Society, furthermore, the endorsement of Karl Marx that Shelley was "one of the advanced guard of socialism." Freedom was both economic and sexual.

Thus it was that Eleanor Marx entered into a "free marriage" with Edward Aveling. They could not be legally united because Aveling already had a living wife. According to Aveling, she was a wealthy religious bigot who had

broken with him because he was a free-thinker. Eleanor was all the more moved to sympathy by the wrong her lover had sustained. From the first, however, there was sadness in this socialist union. Olive Schreiner, Eleanor's closest woman friend, wrote to Havelock Ellis in July, 1884, that Eleanor Marx "is now to be called Mrs. Aveling. I was glad to see her face. I love her. But she looks so miserable." Eleanor insisted on making things difficult for herself. She formally notified the principal of the school in which she was teaching that she had entered into a free alliance, and the principal reluctantly felt obliged to dismiss her. Eleanor could take pride in her gesture for love's freedom, but her alliance brought her daily misery. Three years later, in March, 1887, she wrote desperately to Havelock Ellis: "I should be glad to get any work I am capable of doing. I need work much, and find it very difficult to get. 'Respectable' people won't employ me." It was during this period that Eleanor tried without success to commit suicide by taking an overdose of opium. She was rescued. It was not known what action of Edward Aveling's had led her to this first attempt to kill herself.

EDWARD AVELING would have been ready to die for the Socialist Cause in some moment of supreme sacrifice; he was also ready to deceive it every day. His political life was a series of expulsions. The Executive Council of the Social Democratic Federation tried to prevent him from joining their organisation. The Independent Labour Party expelled him under circumstances so unpleasant that the secretary did not care to divulge them. Aveling would nonchalantly expropriate socialist funds. During the Haymarket Affair, money was collected to send a cablegram to the Governor of Illinois asking him not to execute the condemned anarchists: Aveling took the money for himself. His conscience with regard to socialist women was equally easy: he seduced them wherever and whenever he could. Friedrich Engels received letters from respected women socialists saying they could not attend his social "evenings" so long as Aveling was there. Old Engels remained loyal to the daughter of his best friend and her chosen man.

Then in 1886 the Avelings made a tour of the United States on behalf of the American socialist movement. The usual troubles ensued. The Executive of the Socialist Labour Party warned their American comrades against

Edward Aveling; he had cheated them with false accounts. Engels, his judgment clouded by affection, retorted vehemently that the New York Socialists were worse than the jury which had condemned the Haymarket anarchists.

I have known Aveling for four years; I know that he has twice sacrificed his social and economic position to his convictions, and might be, had he refrained from doing so, a professor, a professor in an English university and a distinguished physiologist instead of an overworked journalist with a very uncertain income.

He felt he knew Aveling's character better than his detractors because he had seen him pass through the most trying circumstances. "It will take a good deal (more than mere assertions and innuendos) before I believe what some people tell about him in New York." The crux of the matter was, however, Eleanor Marx. Could Edward Aveling be called a swindler without compromising Eleanor? Friedrich Engels could not face the thought that Eleanor was sacrificing herself for a liar and a thief; he could not bear to think that the socialist morality had led her into an impasse of unhappiness and the condemnation of dishonour. If Aveling had swindled the American socialists, wrote Engels,

how could he do that during all his tour without his wife being cognisant of it? And in that case the charge included her too. And then it becomes utterly absurd, in my eyes at least. Her I have known from a child, and for the last seventeen years she has been constantly about me. And more than that, I have inherited from Marx the obligation to stand by his children as he would have done himself, and to see, as far as lies in my power, that they are not wronged. And that I shall do, in spite of fifty Executives. The daughter of Marx swindling the working class—too rich indeed!⁷

To defend Eleanor Marx, Engels was ready to tell off every Socialist party in the world. Under emotion's stress, he said what he really thought of the professional leaders of the proletariat: "We have seen Executives rise and fall by the dozen; we know they are as fallible as any pope, and have even known more than one that lived sumptuously on the pence of the working-men, and had swindlers and forgers of accounts in their midst." Then in 1895, Engels, ripe with years and the reverence of the growing socialist movement, died. The Avelings, with

some friends, went out to the sea off Eastbourne to cast away his ashes. Eleanor was to be alone now with her socialist comrade.

FOR a while, thanks to Engels, the financial lot of the Avelings was easier, for he had left them a legacy of about £3,000. They bought a house in Sydenham, which they called, curiously, "Jews' Den." In her loneliness, Eleanor Marx seemed to reach back for the comfort of her Jewish origin. Eduard Bernstein recalled that she took every opportunity to say with pride, "I am a Jewess." "How often," he wrote, "have I heard her shout it to the crowd, from the tribune. . . . Wherever the Jew was persecuted as a Jew, she was not misled by the proletarian class feeling deeply ingrained in her soul, but felt warmly for the oppressed without regard to their class position. So it was in the Dreyfus case. . . ." She told Max Beer that "my happiest moments are when I am in the East End amidst Jewish work-people," and she recalled that Marx had always carried around with him a photograph of his own father which he never showed to strangers; she remembered the face as "very handsome," the eyes and brow like those of the son but the features "softer about the mouth and chin," "definitely Jewish but beautifully so." Her father had harshly rejected any association with Jews, but now Eleanor seemed to be seeking in the memory of her grandfather an alternative authority to her father—one gentler, more human, which had become lost in the son's single-minded communism.

Eleanor groped with this problem of the evil in her lover. Her father's teaching left her unprepared for the problem of life: her misery was a human triviality against the all-encompassing grandeur of the historical process. This triviality, however, was her life and it was being destroyed. H. M. Hyndman, the British socialist leader, thought that loyalty to Aveling was deteriorating Eleanor's character. Yet he acknowledged that he had never seen anyone confront this challenge of personal evil with so much individual power.

This in my opinion was the most remarkable instance I ever encountered of strength of character in a woman overcoming, and finally mastering, a pernicious influence which had gone far to wreck her life. It was wonderful to witness. Unfortunately, it did not go to the length of emancipating her from him altogether. I wish it had.

⁷ These citations will be found in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Letters to Americans, 1845-1895* (edited by Leonard E. Mins, New York, 1953, pp. 171-172).

In the Marxian Decalogue, the words "good" and "justice" were myths. Eleanor had learned from childhood that the ruling class decreed the ethics which best suited its economic interest. Engels, too, had written with magisterial authority that there was no such thing as a universalistic moral sense which transcended the systems of class ethics. Eleanor had read glowing pages which foretold the era of free choice in love which would be the happy consequence of socialist revolution. Then how could Edward Aveling be morally condemned? If he expropriated all and sundry, and seduced with equal élan and extent, was he not a precursor of the man of the classless society, living his life with magnificent unconcern for "bourgeois morals"? Was he to be ostracised because he had the misfortune to be living before his time? And he was a socialist, completely and undeniably, the translator of Marx's *Capital*, the defender of his memory. She could look back to all the work which she had shared with Edward on behalf of the socialist cause, innumerable lectures, committees, manifestos, and the pages of their pioneer study *The Working-class Movement in America*, in which they had reproached American writers with ignoring the antagonism of classes, and written a remarkable chapter on the sociology of the American cowboy as the most exploited of proletarians.

No doubt Eleanor asked herself continually: why had she united herself with Edward Aveling, and why did she find that union so indissoluble? Many years before, she had had a French communist as her first lover. Probably it was Lissagaray, a disinherited count, to whom she had regarded herself at the age of nineteen as engaged. Karl Marx had refused to recognise or speak of this engagement, and had obviously wished to keep his beloved youngest by his side, though he disclaimed any intention of turning "the child" into "an old man's nurse, to be sacrificed on the family altar." Eleanor had waited till she was twenty-nine before she chose for herself Edward Aveling. Shaw thought it was sexual attraction which held Eleanor; Hyndman felt it was a hypnotic subjugation; and still others believed that some Jewish trait of reverence for the marital bond had enthralled her. Was Eleanor proving to herself that she could be just as loyal as her mother had been to her father during their many years of penuried exile? Was the socialist Aveling so much identified with her father's mission that loyalty to the one was loyalty to the other? She had acted with

Edward in many plays which he had written—mostly one-act curtain-raisers for amateur theatricals. Now the socialist tragedians prepared to enact their last scene; Edward Aveling wrote most of the lines.

ELEANOR Marx-Aveling rarely confided in anybody, no matter how great the strain. Early in 1898, however, she was desperate. Edward, without telling her, had sold her belongings, and was spending his time elsewhere; she, too, was simply an object to be used as all others. She wrote to Frederick Demuth, the son of her old nurse, that she was just beginning to understand life:

There are people who lack a certain moral sense just as others are deaf or short-sighted or are in other ways afflicted. And I begin to realise the fact that one is as little justified in blaming them for the one sort of disorder as the other. We must strive to cure them, and if no cure is possible, we must do our best. I have learnt to perceive this through long suffering—suffering whose details I could not tell even to you—but I have learned it, and so I am endeavouring to bear all these trials as well as I can.

Eleanor had rejoiced that at last in her own new home she would be a housewife as other women. Jews' Den, however, brought her no peace. For Edward Aveling was evidently living in the shadow of extortionists. There was some unimaginable secret which Eleanor feared would be exposed to the world. She could not bring herself to tell it even to "Freddy" Demuth, her oldest, closest friend. Aveling pressed her for the bonds which Engels had deposited in her name. When, during their last summer, Aveling left Eleanor, he gave her no address: she was to communicate with him only through a certain actor. Eleanor begged Demuth to seek Edward out at a socialist executive meeting:

I cannot go there because if he's not there, I would have no excuse to give for his absence. I must bother you with all these troubles: but could you go there? ... If he is there, you can approach him—he can't run away in front of others—and wait for him till the meeting ends. Then you can assume that he wishes to come out here; if you notice that he's simply lying, go with him to London Bridge. Then accompany him and say (you can tell him this at once) that you had told me that you wished to come, but that because of your work you would be late, and that I had replied that I would have a bed ready for you. Then he must either tell you that he's not coming, and you can take the opportunity to have a word with him—or that he is coming.

In her last bewildered days, Eleanor turned for help to the simple struggling workingman, Freddy Demuth, as once her family had to the servant girl, Lenchen Demuth. Why, asked Eleanor, had life given her these years of torment? How lucky had her sister Jenny been to die! She began to wonder whether her father had really answered all her questions. Why did evil enter people's lives? "I don't think," she wrote, "that you and I have been particularly bad people—and yet, dear Freddy, it really seems as if we were all being punished." She felt tired and isolated in the world of her brilliant socialist intellectual friends. "Dear Freddy," she said, "you are the only friend with whom I can feel completely free." Her lifetime of self-dedication to the socialist movement was summated in nullity. "You have your boy," she wrote. "I have nothing—and I see nothing to make life worth living."

Meanwhile, Edward Aveling became seriously ill, and required a dangerous operation. He was taken to the Middlesex Hospital; Eleanor was always with him. "There is a French proverb," she wrote, "'To understand is to forgive.' Much suffering has taught me much understanding—and so I do not need to forgive. I can only love." But when Mrs. Hyndman walked with her in the hospital corridor, Eleanor almost broke down as she told the complete story of her humiliation. Mrs. Hyndman, aghast at what she heard, urged her to leave Aveling when he recovered, and Eleanor finally talked of doing so. When the time came, however, Eleanor took her beloved to Margate to nurse him and watch over him. "It is a hard time, for me," she wrote in her last letter, on March 1st, 1898. "I fear there is little to hope for, and the pain and suffering are great. Why we go on like this I do not understand. I am ready to go and would do so with joy, but so long as he needs help I am bound to remain."

UNCERTAINTY beclouds the last days of Eleanor Marx's life. H. M. Hyndman pieced together the sequence of events from the coroner's inquest, his own information, gossip in the socialist movement, and probably revelations from the untroubled, unhaunted Aveling himself. According to Hyndman's narrative, Eleanor Marx had finally begun to hope that her long self-sacrifice in "free marriage" was over. Aveling's legal wife had died, and Eleanor hoped that Edward would marry her. One morning the convalescent Aveling disappeared

for a day. Then a letter came to Eleanor. It evidently brought the news that Edward had just married a young actress, Eva Fryc. John Spargo, who knew both Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling, tells me that it contained a news-clipping of that marriage. Aveling later destroyed the letter before anyone else could see it.

Eleanor's world collapsed. Her island of socialist unity with a comrade was nothing more than a theme for unfeeling gossip. Edward Aveling seemed to delight in reducing her to nothingness. He persuaded Eleanor they should both commit suicide. A prescription for prussic acid and chloroform was written out, apparently in Eleanor's handwriting, but more probably by Aveling himself who had learned to imitate Eleanor's script perfectly. Probably this talent had been useful in the forgery of notes and cheques. Aveling, with an executioner's calm, took the prescription to the chemist's, and got the poison. Eleanor's loyalty never faltered; she took her potion, and died. Aveling deserted her even in her dying moments; he went to the office of the Social Democratic Federation, and called the secretary's attention to the time of his arrival. He was in some confused way arranging an alibi. Eleanor left behind her a letter. It said, according to Eduard Bernstein, "How sad has life been all these years." The coroner found the letter before Aveling could destroy it. At Eleanor's funeral, Aveling indulged in a histrionic grief, then went off to a restaurant with his socialist brothers-in-law. A few months later, Aveling died.

A FEW years ago, however, old legal records and the tattered files of a weekly newspaper, exhumed by Felix Barker, added some facts to the story of Eleanor's death. Edward Aveling, under an assumed name, had been married to his actress friend for ten months before Eleanor killed herself. According to the coroner's interrogation, it was the Avelings' maid who went to the chemist with the prescription written on Aveling's "doctor" stationery, signed "E.A.," and asking that the bearer be given poison "for the dog." The ledger for poisons delivered came back signed "E.M.A." Barker was inclined to exonerate Aveling from direct complicity in Eleanor's death. On the other hand, as Bernstein notes, Aveling had had several discussions with the chemist on the efficacy of different poisons. One gathers that Edward, before having left in the morning for

London, allowed Eleanor to give the maid the prescription. Eleanor, moreover, signed the chemist's receipt in Aveling's presence. Then Aveling left the house. Eleanor was found dead by the maid a few hours later. She was lying on the bed dressed completely in white, and with a letter by her side:

Dear: It will soon be over now. My last word to you is the same that I have said during all the long sad years—love.

We cannot now know whether Edward Aveling made all the arrangements, the stage properties, the timings for entry and exit, for the scene of Eleanor Marx's death. Perhaps he allowed the last day to write itself in its own way, knowing what the inevitable outcome would be. Possibly he didn't know that this was the last day. The coroner's judgment was that Eleanor Marx had committed suicide while temporarily insane. Eleanor might have answered that her death was a redemptive act of sanity after years immersed in the insane. However the matter be phrased, one thing is clear: Edward Aveling had compelled the death of Eleanor Marx.

IT WAS all hopelessly unMarxian. For the Marxian would have said: "To understand is to act, and to forgive is craven-hearted." Self-abnegation, if it meant loving one's exploiter, was contrary to the Marxian scheme of things. But the Marxian upbringing itself had produced this apotheosis of self-immolation; the Marxian ethic in practice had negated itself. The ideological way of life left a gaping vacancy in Eleanor's existence. She longed for a fidelity purely personal, like the devotion she was prepared to give; instead, she was always asked to merge her unhappiness into the greater good of the movement to which Comrade Aveling was contributing. She endured in silence dishonesties and infamies till finally to save herself from more, she chose death. For the ideological man, she perceived, was much like the god-centred, theological one: both used the anointedness of their status to exploit. And she perceived what her father had never taught her—that exploitation is not just an economic category, not

just taking the fruits of another man's work, extracting a man's surplus-value. Economic exploitation was just one of a species, and there were all the forms by which one person could impoverish the life of another, all the varieties of misuses of human beings by each other. The mandate to combat exploitation in its economic form could become a licence to exploit people in others.

Eleanor Marx's suicide in a blunt way refuted her father's ethic, for Marxism defined freedom as the abolition of classes, and called for regarding oneself as an appendage to the class struggle. Eleanor, in order to unite herself to the class struggle in Aveling's guise, committed surgery on her feelings, and brought unreality into her life. Eleanor's surviving sister, Laura, also killed herself a few years later, presumably when she and her husband felt they had nothing more to contribute to the socialist movement.

Karl Kautsky, guardian of orthodox Marxism, wrote that Eleanor could never have chosen "freely" to desert the field of class battle. Clearly, he said, she had been overpowered by some sudden irrationality. Ethics, founded on the materialist conception of history, had finally nothing to say to the human individual but its own categorical imperative: "Act to advance the class struggle."⁸

All three of Marx's daughters were married in the political fold to active socialists. Had Marx the father somehow mangled the capacity of his children to enjoy the savour of living? Eleanor at the age of six had allowed her mind to be settled by her father; she felt no more doubts afterwards; she never questioned her father's writings; she worshipped them as sacred words. Eleanor never experienced the sense of discovering herself in conflict with her heritage. Abraham was spared the sacrifice of Isaac, but Marx's Historical Process, more like a Moloch, demanded all his sons and daughters.

WHEN George Bernard Shaw wrote his play about Eleanor Marx, he could not bring himself to leave the reality as stark as it was. He allowed the heroine of *The Doctor's Dilemma*, Jennifer Dubedat, to survive her scoundrel-husband, and to make a second, happy marriage. Eleanor was the prototype for the lovely, faithful Jennifer Dubedat, the only woman in all of Shaw's plays who loves with complete passion. Mrs. Dubedat, like Eleanor, defies the whole world to show her that her husband has done any wrong thing, and the sur-

⁸Two important articles by Eduard Bernstein—"Eleanor Marx" and "Was Eleanor Marx in den Tod trieb?" *Die Neue Zeit*, Vol. XVI, Band II (1897-1898), pp. 118-123, 481-491—very much confirm the story of Eleanor's death as reported by Hyndman.

geon, Ridgeon, like Shaw, cannot face to face tell her anything against him. Louis Dubedat, who is Edward Aveling transformed into a painter of genius reciting Shelleyan lines to the last, is an utter villain, but Shaw is of two minds about him. For Dubedat might defend his actions as simply those of a free-lancing rebel against capitalist morality. And in one passage (which the acting versions usually omit) Dubedat cites Shavian Scripture for his defence: "All your moralisings have no value for me. I don't believe in morality. I'm a disciple of Bernard Shaw . . . the most advanced man now living." Shaw was happily able to use his dramatist's liberty to make a Fabian revision of reality. The surgeon Ridgeon, asked to choose between saving the life of a working-class doctor or the artist-master, chooses the social servant. The orderly Fabian wins over the lawless rebel: "The most tragic thing in the world is a man of genius who is not also a man of honour." But in actuality, the real surgeon, Christopher Heath saved Aveling's life, much to the dismay

of Eleanor's friends. There was a suggestion left in *The Doctor's Dilemma* that with a slight turn of events, Jennifer too might be destroyed. If she lost faith in Dubedat, she says, "it would mean the wreck and failure of my life," and she would show Ridgeon the very cliff from which she would jump off. Eleanor lost faith. Was the doctor's disinterested murder Shaw's own vicarious verdict in retrospect upon his rival Aveling?

The Fabian ethic was, indeed, as helpless as the Marxian, and the doctor's dilemma was Shaw's insoluble one. The Fabians wanted, like the Bolsheviks, to be the Jesuits of socialism. "Working for the cause," they believed, was the purpose of life; it would fill one's mind with divine thoughts, and one's earthly hands with things to do. The evil Aveling and the martyred Eleanor never fitted into the well-made Socialist script, which tended very early to repress the recalcitrant and unsocialisable. Will it some day grow wise and humane enough for both father and daughter, for both Karl and Eleanor Marx?

The Middle Years

Between the pale young failure
And the bloated purple success
Lie the works on the life of the dahlia
Or the shrewd financial guess.

Between the love and the yearnings
And the fat indifference of age
Lie the greatly increased earnings
And the slick best-selling page.

Between the romantic lover
And the sordid dirty old man
Lies the fruitful wasted lifetime
Of the years that also ran.

Gavin Ewart

Conversation in Brazil

With Gilberto Freyre — By KEITH BOTSFORD

APIPUCOS is at the very limit of the city of Recife. A district much favoured by the English in the days of the Brazilian monarchy, it still retains a pastoral and courtly quality. Large solid houses stand in large shaded gardens; the lesser degrees have lime-yellow cottages, all in a line, with lintels painted white. Apipucos seems doubly regal now: perching as it does on the edge of poverty, existing apart and aloof from a city where those who have nothing to eat dig crabs, nocturnally, from their own sewerage. (This has a name; it's called "the Crab Cycle," and, as I was told, "once a man gets on it, he has no more than two years to live. . .")

Gilberto Freyre, by far the best-known abroad of Brazilian intellectuals, lives in a fine 18th-century house in Apipucos: a true *Casa Grande*. The garden bears all manner of fruit; the walls are tiled blue; and inside the furniture is old and solid—the *jacaranda* is a nobleman's wood, acquiring polish with tradition. The man is very like his house. His mind is lofty, and also exotic; his temper aristocratic but tolerant. The knowledge, especially the *lore*, of Brazil that fills his conversation—itself a sonorous and stylish speech—is choked, generous, and rich, like carving or mosaic.

To be what Freyre has always been in Brazil—

FEW voices reach us from South America, only news items. The novelist, Keith Botsford, who teaches at the University of Puerto Rico, has visited the distinguished Brazilian historian and social philosopher, Gilberto Freyre, and in a series of tape-recorded interviews has tried to illuminate some of the puzzling political and cultural background. Only two of Freyre's works are at present available in English—his masterpiece called THE MASTERS AND THE SLAVES (New York and London, 1946-48), and a collection of essays, NEW WORLD IN THE TROPICS (New York, 1959).

a conservative, a humanist, and a scholar—is to hold a more radical position than many a professed revolutionary: it is so against the stream. Brazil is in the giddy stage of its development: its population multiplies, its energies elbow it into modern times. It is part Portuguese mariner, part sober Iberian, and infinitely a mixture of temperaments, colours, and secular religions—the "left," *futebol*, progress, *carnaval* and reform. It is not a country to honour Freyre as its prophet, though it honours him in other ways; perhaps because he was one of those most responsible for Brazilians accepting what they are—mixed, harmonious, democratic—as a definition of their national *ethos*. Among his major works, *Casa Grande e Senzala*, *Sobrados e Mucambos*, and *Ordem e Progresso*, are perhaps the principal statements of what Brazil was and is. If some are impatient with him, it is probable that they do not recognise this debt, or that they are themselves too narrow specialists, and find no ready classification for a work that is at the same time social history, sociological anthropology, antiquarianism, and literature. Almost all that Freyre has written in nearly three decades is still valid and valuable: there are few social scientists of whom that can be said. He drew black marks from the *intelligentsia* for seemingly supporting the Portuguese position in Africa—an accusation not quite true, since his position is that of a mediator, anxious to persuade metropolitan Portuguese to change, and Africans to be patient. But even if the accusation were entirely true, it would be consistent with Freyre's lifelong advocacy of the values of the Portuguese world, a superior coloniser, a sturdy pioneer, and of the Brazilian-European intermingled with primitive Indian and slave Negro.

IN THE PREFACE to one of Gilberto Freyre's most interesting, but least-known works, *Um Engenheiro Francês no Brasil* (1940), a work which re-creates the society of Recife in the

1840s (and by analogy, Brazilian 19th-century life) through the use of a mass of material drawn from every possible source, the French sociologist Arrousse-Bastide made the following observation:

What other means of survival is there... when one is part of a civilisation that is still chaotic, except not letting oneself be hypnotised by this chaos, and living as well as one can, insisting on solving practical problems one by one, and making certain that one is not encumbered by a general vision whose dense panorama, ever exposed to the mind, would end by becoming morally debilitating?

I asked Freyre if this were not the basic process of the intelligentsia in the newer societies, with their "*panorama touffu*"? Was it not likely that intellectuals would proceed, first, to a thorough inventory, a process of classification, instead of venturing immediately into the general? Possibly, this was one of the reasons, in the early stages of national life, for the intensely nationalistic bias in the definition of emerging cultures.

FREYRE: I think it is evident that new societies demand of social analysis a different technique, because the problems are different. In fact, there is already talk of a "sociology of underdeveloped nations," which would take into account the special problems of such societies. The historians and sociologists of these nations have always felt a need to pay close attention to certain aspects of their past and present that would not be of major importance in highly-developed societies. This seems to me both understandable and logical. There is an "inventory" to be taken. Hence my feeling that sociology, in a country like Brazil, must be historical, anthropological, and even folk-lore, in the sense that it should study the literature, the popular poetry, and the folk-lore of those peoples which do not have a written literature. From the beginning of my work, I've felt the need to consider Brazil "regionally"—hence an expression I've consistently used, "inter-regional dynamics," to describe one characteristic of Brazilian development. If we don't follow this method, we are liable to produce a superficial or inexact "panorama."

—Sometimes we don't use such care because we're in a hurry to come up with a "general view." Arrousse Bastide calls it "the anxiety to conclude"....

FREYRE: In 1936 I lectured to the students at the Law School in São Paulo: my theme was that we should beware of hasty conclusions concerning Brazil, that Brazil still required much study

—of which very little was being done—to understand its situation, which was different from the European, different from that of the United States. For there were some who wanted to import an "American" solution, or a French, or a Russian.... And it is much the same thing today. I'm about to re-publish this essay, under the title, "Less Doctrine and More Analysis!"

—None the less, sociology and the social sciences have a duty to arrive at conclusions, abstractions, to see the "*panorama*." What is the process involved?

FREYRE: That of assembling the greatest possible number of significant details: details which, taken together, can be considered "typical." Thus one can even use biography as a method, as I have tried to do in *Ordem e Progresso*, which I consider my most important work: bringing together a significant number of "typical" biographies of individuals of different classes and varying conditions, even distinct races, as in Brazil, who live in a specific time and react differently to the events of that time. These biographies, or confessions, had a purpose: to perceive what was most significant in the period, what made the greatest impression on these men as a group—thus arriving at an abstraction about the truth. Through varying "truths" to arrive at a general truth; through the "Pirandellian" truth of each to the general truth of all. This kind of historical sociology is necessary; but it is not sufficient. Those dense situations that Arrousse-Bastide describes are situations that require a plurality of methods; historical, psychological, even psycho-analytical....

—Or, as you once said, "what is human can only be explained humanely—one has to leave room for doubt, even for mystery...."

FREYRE: I said this in reaction to an all-absorbing "scientism," especially in the study of man. I was trying to establish the point that a purely scientific sociology was not sufficient. I was reacting against the pan-economics of the economists, who believe that the social can be explained by the economic factor, and the human by the social. I was suggesting that there were human matters that escaped such interpretations, and required psychological, or even philosophical and religious analysis.

—There is, then, some truth to the notion that history is becoming more sociological, and sociology more historical. In your own case, you have spent a good part of your life on "tropical studies."

FREYRE: I have been trying to rehabilitate areas, climates, and values that are not being evaluated

as they ought to be. In Europe and the United States, until recently, the tropics were considered worthless. They even had a sort of pathology of their own: "tropical" diseases, vices, defects. Modern techniques have eliminated much of this particular aspect of tropical life; but that's not what I'm talking about when I speak of "tropical values." I'm not interested in the introduction of European values into tropical society, but in a combination of these technological advances and those values that already exist in the tropics. What I do in sociology is a sort of existential sociology, in the sense that I've always studied man within his *situation*.

We have a tendency to think of history as written history. But for years now the meaning of history has been enlarged to include anthropological examination of the pasts of peoples who have no recorded history. I think that one of my innovations in the analysis of Brazil was the application of this technique.

—*This is all very well when dealing with "primitive" peoples, but aren't the élites of most of these new cultures in full revolt against their traditional cultures?*

FREYRE: Then the élites are failing in their responsibilities. Their criterion should be to unite their new knowledge with the traditions of their own.

—*We are agreed they should use their own history, but, is all of it useful? What should they select?*

FREYRE: They select on a pragmatic basis, on the basis of a "usable past."

—*And what is done with the past one does not wish to use?*

FREYRE: It is repudiated. A people repudiates that part of its past which it cannot, or should not, use. It throws it into what I have called the "historical garbage." To put it more precisely, this past is merely laid aside. One does not know whether it will remain passive, when no longer used. Sometimes this unusable past revenges itself on the people who no longer use it. Thus we often have irrational forces influencing the rational forces that should direct the people. Not everything can be eliminated that one wants to. There are certain parts of the past that we consider entirely dead; yet they have been known to erupt like volcanoes. We had in Brazil—in the Canudos incident immortalised by Euclides da Cunha in his *Os*

Sertões [published in an English translation by Samuel Putnam under the title *Rebellion in the Backlands*—an eruption of this kind. The rebellion drew attention to a rejected past, the *Sertanejo* past, and there was a revival of *Sertanejo* values. . . . In Brazil, we have several eras side by side. Some of the population still lives in the colonial era; some in the mid-19th century; some is as up-to-date as can be; and still another part is entirely primitive. I lectured on this subject at Princeton last year: the relation between Time, Society, and Man.

—*About this process of "abstracting" in relation to a society: has the moment come in which this process is possible for Brazil?*

FREYRE: It's difficult to say, particularly if you're looking for a "national" structure. Nationality is not a basic reality, but a creation of politics, though of course it includes elements of popular, cultural, and historical traditions. Did Brazil have the characteristics of a national society when it became independent (1822)? I don't know. Enough, culturally speaking; not enough, economically—for it passed immediately from being a Portuguese to being a British colony. None the less, there were a number of elements that could be considered basic to a national structure. For instance, Brazil already had, at that time, a long tradition of social *convivência** under a patriarchal system. There already existed a culture that reflected this, such as the novels of José de Alencar. In them one finds besides a rather poetical "indianising," the reflection of a sincere *convivência*, quite different in spirit from anything known in Europe.

—*One senses this national pride in Brazil, which is the basis for Brazil's stated desire to act as an "intermediary" in Africa: the racial convivência of the country. But for the foreigner, this is not immediately convincing. The impartial observer notes that there exist, along with the general harmony, certain marked upper limits to negro employment, education, social assimilation, etc. Discrimination does exist, doesn't it? and hence the possibility of the cultural and economic domination of one part of the population by another?*

FREYRE: Yes, it exists. It is a class prejudice, rather than a racial prejudice. It's entirely natural, when you think that this is a country which until very recently—1888—still tolerated slavery. The aversion for the individual who derives from the *senzala* [the slave-quarters of the plantations, as opposed to the *Casa Grande*, in Freyre's pioneering work] is an aversion explicable in terms of class, and even of caste: the seigniorial caste, the aristocratic caste as against the servile. One expects that such things will

* This word, which Freyre often uses, and is a key to his interpretation of Brazilian history, is difficult to translate; it means "living together in harmony."

survive; but in my opinion they are disappearing, through miscegenation, through racial mixture.

—But isn't the trend to social ascension by inter-marriage with whites, or persons of lighter skin?

FREYRE: This too is explicable in terms of "status"—but there is a similar tendency in the opposite direction.

—Isn't there some danger of an "irreducible" portion of the population: a part that will never be incorporated, and hence suffer economic and other forms of discrimination?

FREYRE: Why would such a minority come to be? It might if one part of the population remained culturally degraded. But this is not likely, with an increased number of schools and the diminution of illiteracy. With education comes the possibility of social ascension. It's possible that in the rural regions the assimilation will be retarded; but if you think in terms of twenty, thirty, or fifty years, and consider the development of communications, of new means of acculturation (radio, television, etc.), I think the process of cultural development will be speeded up. . . . Actually, the question of class does not strike me as difficult to solve. Ascension in Brazil is relatively easy, and class mobility well-established. The question of regional imbalance strikes me as far more important, and far more neglected. There are powerful economic interests acting against a better regional balance, particularly in São Paulo. These talk in terms of economic nationalism, but in fact they are operating anti-nationally.

For instance, an American company wished to establish a plant in the North-East, and this plant would have had, as one of its many beneficial side-effects, that of immediately reducing electricity rates throughout the North-East, which would, in turn, attract more industry to the region. The proposal was studied with great care, and approved by the best engineers in Brazil. But the project was killed by these interests in São Paulo: they said the industry should be a Brazilian industry, and not American, though everyone knew that they had neither the capital, the capacity, nor the technique for such an enterprise. In fact, their only aim was to prevent the formation in the North-East of an industry that might compete with their own. This is false economic nationalism. . . . Here in Brazil, the centre of wealth has always been, at least since the industrialisation of the nation, in the Centre and South, particularly in São Paulo. The North-East is retarded economically, and I consider the adjustment of this imbalance of the greatest urgency. The situation could get worse; it could reach the point of desperation. Then

that desperation could be exploited by the communists. Some of our leaders do not understand that this is a national problem; they think of it as a regional claim. But actually the whole economic and political health of the nation depends on a proper balance among the regions. Of course, there is a lot of pressure exerted against politicians. . . .

—With accompanying corruption?

FREYRE: In a certain sense, Brazil is going through a period rather like the Italian Renaissance: many bold acts are permitted, and corruption is tolerated. It's the first time we have to worry about that sort of thing in Brazil. During the Empire, there were really rigorous standards. The temptations were not as great, but they were big enough, what with the beginnings of industrialisation and the coming of the great foreign interests. . . . None the less, for all the toleration, and even admiration Brazilians have for this kind of freebooting, the enormous vote they gave Janio Quadros in the last elections was far more significant: what Janio represented more than anything else, was a profound reaction against the administrative corruption that showed itself during the Kubitschek régime. . . .

—In spite of all this, regional maladjustment, corruption, and so on, Brazilians seem full of confidence. It's a widespread belief to-day that Brazil is or could be the leader of Latin America.

FREYRE: I know this movement exists—to build up our prestige in Latin America—but I don't think we're doing what we ought to. Our Latin-American relations are greatly neglected. None the less, the possibilities are so great that these relations will necessarily have to be strengthened in the next decades. There's much to be done in the field of cultural relations. Some of our literature and our popular music does get beyond our borders. But for literature, for instance, we need translations. And here the problem is that, though *we* read Spanish with relative ease, Spanish-Americans do not have the same facility with Portuguese. Brazil is the Number One importer of Spanish books; it imports more Spanish books than any Spanish-speaking country; our technical and training manuals are almost all Spanish. People like Ortega y Gasset are very widely read, and I think that García Lorca has had more influence here than in any other country in Latin America.

—Latin Americans as a whole are often accused of being "amateurs of ideas," dilettantes.

FREYRE: The word can be used pejoratively, of course, though I think there is such a thing as a "good" dilettante. But on the whole, the diagnosis is correct. Such amateurs exist in

abundance. They are people who read two or three books on a subject and then write a book themselves. They are people of the greatest facility and the greatest superficiality; they use rhetoric and "ideas" as a substitute for knowledge. This has done immeasurable harm in Latin America. Of course such people do "love" ideas; but the love is skin-deep. The result is a certain admiration for the improviser, the "brilliant talent," and a certain scorn for systematic study. Among some (including some Brazilians), the scholar is a man who has failed as a "man of talent." Unable to improvise, he studies. A man can be admired for writing a book at a table in a café, for not having a study: his talent is "pure."

—Is there any difference, in this respect, or in others, between Spanish and Portuguese America?

FREYRE: A Spanish writer once said, rather paradoxically, that Spain and Portugal had separated from each other due to an excess of similarities. I myself have always maintained that Brazil is the most Hispanic nation in the world, because it is of *both* Spanish and Portuguese formation. Due to this, it is both the heir of Portugal and yet sensitive to certain subtleties that are purely Spanish. This places Brazil in an ideal position to mediate the divergencies that still exist between nations of Spanish formation. It has understanding, yet it also stands apart from the intimate rivalries between these Spanish nations. Culturally, of course, Brazil did not inherit from its mother country a culture either as powerful or as well-formed as these nations did from Spain. Brazil had to look elsewhere for its sources of inspiration, particularly to France. This French influence at some points endangered the "Iberian" nature of Brazilian culture. But on the whole it was beneficent: it opened up perspectives to Brazil that may have been lacking in the other nations of the continent.

SINCE the Quadros government, Brazilian foreign policy has been explicitly directed towards a policy of "leadership" in the so-called "tiers monde," the new, the underdeveloped, the "neutral" nations. The patterns of reverse migration (of slaves or ex-slaves returning to their original homes, particularly in West Africa) has already created one link between Brazil and Africa. A common language with some of the few remaining colonies in Africa, the Portuguese territories, is another. A few years ago, you travelled throughout Africa, and through all the Portuguese "provinces." Have you modified your views since then?

FREYRE: You know, I don't think Brazil should call itself a "leader." This leadership might come to be recognised, but it should not be proclaimed. Brazil *can* influence these nations. Its presence in some countries is desirable, and, in some fields, even necessary—as an anti-imperialist "presence." However, I am thinking more of culture than of politics. In Portuguese Africa, the Rhodesias, and so on, the black populations desire a cultural link with Brazil, as a defence against South African plans to create a federation of white minorities. These new nations, or quasi-nations, are trying to escape South African imperialism, which is characterised by the belief that the only superior civilisation in Africa is "white civilisation," and that for this civilisation to remain "pure, true, and Christian," it must be maintained by the Dutch Reformed Church and any other group that does not contaminate itself with the natives.

—Is there any real danger of such a federation?

FREYRE: I think it's an evident danger. The white minorities in the Rhodesias would like nothing better than to join a federation with South Africa, and absorb not only Mozambique, but also part of Angola. . . . If the élites of these Portuguese "provinces" had a Brazilian formation, they would be much more adapted to African conditions than they can possibly be with a British or French formation. They look to Brazil with a special sympathy and confidence. But our diplomacy, like that of the United States, has an over-simplified anti-colonialist policy. They are "anti-colonial" without taking into account situations that still require a great deal of care. This was the case with the Congo. The country was not prepared for the independence that the United States so eagerly supported. There's no way of avoiding the drive for independence, but the means of transition can be prepared, as the English have done in some areas: with much wisdom, in my opinion. No one wants to deny any country independence. The problem is how to prepare for it. There was no preparation in the Congo. It was one of the great defects of the Belgians.

—Are the Portuguese preparing?

FREYRE: Undoubtedly, but much too slowly. This is what's wrong. The rhythm ought to be accelerated. It's years now that Portugal should have had a University in both Mozambique and Angola. They seem afraid of such institutions, which is nonsensical—unless they plan to perpetuate metropolitan Portuguese domination in Africa, which is unthinkable.

—So far, African education has been élite education, and are these small, officious, and totalitarian-minded élites in Africa very sympa-

thetic? Don't they really lack both humility and humanity, and isn't there a danger of fanaticism?

FREYRE: I think you could say that wherever a small élite lives apart from the mass of the people, there is a danger to liberty. The better formula would probably be a combination of élite education with an education that aims at general popular representation. I don't think that our exaggerated respect for democracy should make us forget the need for élites, and for the training of élites. The totalitarian countries are not forgetting this need.

—But in those countries, the Party is the élite.

FREYRE: They value their élites, though not culture in general. They fear the philosopher, the sociologist, the free intellectual, or the artist. In the United States there is a certain prejudice against the "above-average." The above-average may have a dangerous tendency to form a narrow élite; but there is an equally great danger in not taking advantage of the above-average, a danger to human development. Human development is far more important than a perfect democratic development. . . . The question of élites is linked to centralism, the tendency to create large, centralised states. Necessary and desirable as these may be from a certain point of view, for the saving of cultural value one must form small nations, as much as possible limited to homogeneous groups. The Congo was a "European" idea, a "convenience" for the United Nations, whose political experts were thinking as Europeans, and not as Africans.

—But it was the Africans themselves, the Congolese, who created the state. . . .

FREYRE: Yes, a small Europeanised élite, full of individual ambitions, for they wished to become leaders of great and important, not small nations. Yet nothing prevents these small nations in Africa from forming themselves into economic or political federations. This is the only way to preserve regional cultures. Large states contain numbers of small dissident groups. To rule these, the government becomes dictatorial; it uses violence to ensure that these "tribal survivals" disappear, almost overnight! I consider culture more important than politics. We must try to conciliate the cultural with the political and economic, instead of merely forgetting the cultural.

—Alas! The vocabulary of these nations is full of "progress" and "industrialisation." You don't hear much about culture. . . .

FREYRE: So much the worse for them! The reason lies with their élites, their leaders, who are not well-integrated into the necessities and aspirations of their peoples. One of these leaders

—I know him and like him very much—Leopold Senghor of Sénégal, talks a lot about "*négritude*," but he himself is a nearly perfect Frenchman, in his ideas, in his conception of what an African nation should be. His "*négritude*" is, I fear, largely a rhetorical expression. Another example is the man who headed the Angolan rebels—he uses sometimes a Portuguese, and sometimes an African name, but really he's French both by formation and language—Mario Andrade. We talked a whole afternoon, and the burden of his argument was simply that Africa should be independent immediately. He's a kind of African negro radical, very susceptible, a man of action, actively engaged in revolutionary work, and very sectarian; he cannot see beyond his Marxist concepts. There was no dialogue possible. He was impenetrable. It was quite impossible to reach a third position with him, one that would be neither mine, nor his. He is a product of that French sectarianism that makes the French communists such narrow and fanatical men. This kind of sectarianism is anti-African; it shows a man who does not feel African problems as an African.

—What about the whole question of "forced development," the "mania for industrialisation" you spoke about in NEW WORLD IN THE TROPICS? the dangers of "technical" training excluding humanistic?

FREYRE: Technicians are important to civilisation, particularly at a time when civilisation itself is turning increasingly technical. But one of my battles with SUDENE [the giant development group responsible for the regional planning of the North-East] is against what I call "pan-economism" or "pan-technology" in the consideration of such problems as poverty and hunger. We are forgetting the human side, the psychological and cultural part of these problems. Resolving the problems of hunger or poverty is not to resolve *all* Brazilian problems, or even those of its under-developed regions. SUDENE has considered the wholesale transfer of populations from the arid to the humid regions of the North-East—but without preparing the population for such a move, for life in new surroundings, for dependence on new sources of food, new relations to space. Such problems have a physical basis; but they are far more problems of human *convivência*. One has to prepare the way, with education, persuasion, propaganda.

—Are you distressed by the fact that in the plans the Brazilian government put together for submission to the "Alliance for Progress," education and culture are almost neglected?

FREYRE: If we don't attach to these things the importance they are due, we will be failing, and

preparing further failures in the future. We must show people that "technology" alone does not resolve their problems. Take the example of the Ford community in Pará. It failed because its organisers did not take into account the human and psychological factors of the problems they had to face. For instance, they brought with them what they considered was "a healthy diet." But they did not see that this diet might not be healthy for Brazilian workers—because it deprived them of all the folk-lore associated with food, all the poetry: such things were considered valueless and archaic, irrelevant. But, in fact, the workers rebelled against a diet that ran contrary, so to speak, to their "humanistic" diet. I repeat: we need technicians and technology; but we also need cultural persuasion and action.

Is the situation in Brazil, despite its institutional structures, so very different from that in many other nations in the "tiers monde"? Throughout Latin America one finds the issues of politics confused with rhetorical flourishes, with language misused and abused. Do the traditional concepts—such as "left" and "right," "socialism" and "democracy"—have any accepted meanings any longer?

FREYRE: The word "left" now means, in Brazil, "activity on behalf of renovation," and sometimes, though not always, this activity is extended to "revolutionary" activity. Our "left" is opposed to a series of conventions, to a prevalent inertia. The Brazilian "leftist" wants a change; he wants renewal. But he is very imprecise as to exactly what form of renewal it is he wants. Some call themselves communists, but don't even know what communism is. There was a group here in Pernambuco that called itself communist, but apparently had nothing to do with communism. It was discovered later that they were followers of an agitator called "*Muniz*": hence, *com Muniz*!... None the less, there is a revival of the communist "presence" here in Brazil, particularly in the universities. After a period in which communist agitation had almost entirely disappeared [under the Vargas régime, though in the period preceding his dictatorship, Vargas and some of his entourage stimulated a certain "leftism" among intellectuals—K. B.], and communist influence among university students had been consequently lost, the communists, around 1955, made a clever move: they began to cultivate the *secundaristas* [high-school students], then adolescents. These are *now* the university students and continue under that influence. Our students, here and throughout Latin America, have always been natural radicals and agitators... The popularity of this

"leftism" is due in large part to the fact that our political parties only function on the eve of elections. They have no activities designed to enlighten or to keep in touch with popular movements; thus, they have no appeal to the young. They are parties in name only. As for communism, which is not a legal party in Brazil, its appeal corresponds to the messianic aspirations in the air, to that search for some magic solution to all problems that is endemic in Brazil. Communism passes itself off as a messianic movement.

—Didn't democracy once exercise the same appeal? What has happened to make it an apparently "conservative" force?

FREYRE: In Brazil it emptied itself of its messianic content by allying itself to a liberal democracy tied to the *coroneis* [the semi-feudal *fazendeiros*, the great landlords of Brazil] of the interior. In every municipality, there were two "colonels," each linked to one of the two parties. Both parties were ostensibly "democratic"; but these "colonels" were, in fact, merely successors to the imperial barons. This led to a devaluation of the word "democracy"... Today, democracy in Brazil is letting itself be undercut in its own strongholds: press, radio, television. These are now instruments of communist propaganda and their proprietors are asleep at the switch. It's all very well to write editorials (exaggerated and so stale) against communism and panegyrics of democracy; but the fact is that nine-tenths of the news and accompanying commentary is fabricated by the communists. Just as some students are not really students, but grown men who stay on in the universities, and agitate...

—Is this the well-known democratic "suicidal urge?"

FREYRE: So it seems. Of course, when elections come along, democracy kicks up a big fuss. But in normal times, which are the decisive times, its attitude is one of inertia and complete incomprehension of social problems. After the Vargas "suppression," communism was slow in re-appearing; in fact, it is a recent phenomenon, and due to a number of reasons, particularly the repercussions of the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union, with Russia apparently taking a scientific "lead." I think this contributed greatly to a new admiration for communism among intellectuals and quasi-intellectuals. It seemed to indicate that communism was capable of creating an "advanced" nation.

—Wouldn't most people agree that both communism and democracy are able to do so? The difference lies in cost and kind.

FREYRE: Almost all Brazilians are anti-communists; we know that communism is a totalitarian dictatorship. But many are not particularly discriminating on this score. The general simplified idea is that Russia is an example of communism (which I consider very doubtful) and that it is successful: hence communism is successful. You must not forget that the underdeveloped nations have a certain "feminine" attitude towards powerful nations; admiration for the strongest, regardless of ideology. I say that I doubt Russia is a true communist state because I believe that what exists in Russia is an efficient dictatorship. Supposedly this dictatorship is based on the proletariat: actually we have abundant evidence that it is certainly not developing in favour of this proletariat (which remains "symbolic"), but in favour of what Djilas called a "new class." Its technical successes have been due in far greater measure to dictatorship than to any natural superiority of communism. Besides, according to economists, there is an evident "state capitalism" in Russia; and "state capitalism" is not socialism.

—*The humble, the poor, the ignorant and unlettered may be taken in by communism, but what of the intellectual who is in a position to know better, and who has a responsibility to think clearly? How about the poet we have been meeting, or Jorge Amado?*

FREYRE: The poet's communism is an answer to his position as a poor man and a sufferer, and I do not think he will remain a communist for long. As for Jorge Amado, who is perhaps the only Brazilian writer of any importance allied to the communist party, he is purely an "intuitive." Because of this, he's a good novelist, but for the same reason, not a true intellectual; an admirable creator in literature, but not a creator as a thinker, therefore not a true intellectual in combining thought with art.

—*Aren't they aware of the fact that they enjoy here a physical and mental independence they couldn't have in Eastern Europe, and yet they still opt for totalitarianism?*

FREYRE: Much of it is ignorance. They think the lack of liberty behind the Iron Curtain is nothing but anti-communist propaganda.

—*Pasternak?*

FREYRE: No doubt it was really so. It's merely an *incapacity* to see clearly: due partly to ignorance, and partly to well-made communist propaganda.

—*But isn't there also an element of intellectual dishonesty there? And doesn't it take more courage to be an honest democrat than to be a totalitarian?*

FREYRE: They swim with the current. That's the dominant current. . . .

—*What of the recent Latin American coups, doesn't it pose the problem of whether legitimate elections should be annulled to "protect" democracy?*

FREYRE: Democracy has to defend itself. If we go off into Byzantine scruples about "democracy," we're going to fall under the domination of bold and fanatical groups: why shouldn't Argentine democracy defend itself? Excessive scruples in facing certain situations are characteristic of exceptional times, like those we live in. We democrats, who believe in the possibility of a democratic dynamic able to solve contemporary problems, cannot act as though these were normal days, which permitted purely juridical solutions. We have to be both more realistic and more decisive; we cannot be such purists.

—*Isn't this the argument of Germany in '33, and Cuba in '60? . . .*

FREYRE: That there are perversions of the argument does not invalidate it. I think anyone who says we're not at war is deluding himself. Things like the Hungarian massacre occur right under our "democratic" eyes, and what do we do? We accept a situation that stems from a "realistic" policy by the Soviet Union. I would say to the Russians "if you're going to seek realistic solution, so shall we." I don't find this absurd, and I don't think the Russians would either. I think that's what they expect from enlightened leaders on whatever side; they don't expect to find leaders who want to commit suicide.

MAY I offer you an opportunity for second thoughts on any of the above record of our conversation?

FREYRE: Yes, I should like to make two corrections, or amplifications. First: do I wish the Africans, in regard to Portugal, to be "patient"? No, no, and no. I wish them to act differently from the "nationalists" in the former colonies of European powers, where these Europeans discriminated against them on account of race in a way that was never *dominant* in Portuguese Africa or India. I would like to see the leaders of the African movements against the present régime in Portugal get in closer touch, not with Soviet communists, or American "liberals," who do not understand them, but with Brazilians, and prepare Angola and Mozambique to become members of a Portuguese-speaking federation, for these are people inclined, more than others, to be racially and socially democratic. I consider

racial and social democracy far more important than political democracy (so prized by Anglo-Saxons) or economic democracy (considered to be the democracy *par excellence* by the Soviets). I regret that Brazilian diplomacy is failing, in regard to Africa, because its present leaders are trying to please both U.S. liberals and Brazilian followers of Russian communism.

—*And the second?*

FREYRE: Well, should I really be described as a conservative? It is amazing to me that such a description should be given of my ideas. A “conservative” who has been in prison—political prison—as an agitator against conservative ideas and conventional positions in politics, organised religion, and political mores? A “conservative” who wrote a book considered by conservatives to be against “the best Brazilian, Catholic traditions,” and even unpatriotic and disloyal to Brazil, at least

as the country is understood by conservatives? Perhaps I should be considered a contradictory mixture of conservative and revolutionary: with the revolutionary as the decisive element. For I am violently anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois, disdainful of academic conservatism; in ideas, in intellectual behaviour, in art, opposed to standardised, conservative civilisations such as the United States and to what I consider to be reactionary civilisations, such as the Soviet Union. My ideas are basically anarcho-syndicalist; I favour diversity, personality, and at the same time social co-ordination for the general welfare. I am opposed to a Christianity associated with bourgeois, conservative elements, and to European civilisation as *the Christian Civilisation*. I am a revolutionist, not only in my ideas of social organisation, but also in my interpretations of the social past, not only of Iberians in general, but also of Brazilians in particular. I am for social revolution—a deep one, that includes miscegenation.

Senior English Master

for Edward Upward

I never knew my presence so annoy—
He sat behind his paper and his specs
Pretending to be interested in News
Screaming the lies across his weathered face
Who had been in his time irreverent,
Rebellious and famous as the rest,
But now was calm and dignified, at most
A man of reason and a connoisseur
Who recognised a fake for what I was
As, rising from his chair, he ambled out
But tapped my head in passing, at a thought,
Abstractedly, to see if it were real,
Then muttered to himself, “I thought as much”.

Alasdair Aston

Verbal Behaviour

*No sense in fretting to be off the ground,
There's never hurry whither we are bound,
Where all's behaviour— and the rest is naught,
Not even rest, but void beyond all thought.*

I

Ponder what plausibilities we may
Our ponderings impond'rables obey.
Swayed by a breath, a balance never still,
The will forespent to guard us from our will,
We hang in stays. Stay now to seem to see
I.e. (e.g.) not what it seems to be.
Id est, that is: tune in and focus sharp
Upon the string on which I have to harp.

Identifying *id*'s one task; its mother,
Identifying *what it's said to be*, another;
Uniting two such ventures is a third.
To make these three all one would be absurd
Were it not general custom of the tribe
To which all viable thinkers must subscribe
Or give away that they don't know the ropes
By which are raised and lowered all our hopes.

Nor are *e.g.s*, for example, any better
Or less in need of checking to the letter;
In need of charity, the kind blind eye
Ready to let disparities slip by;
In need of easy openness of mind
To let whatever will make up a kind;
Let things be things, be all alike in that,
All other sorts be sort of from a hat.

Look close, be choosy, test, assay, appraise,
And clear-cut limits thin out into haze;
The actual dissolves, the formulas extend,
Advance, combine, replace us as our end.
The principle how clear! How plain the rule!
Until—what can possess the fool, or school,
To clamour for examples! Be content
If somehow, wordless, you divine what's meant.

What *YOU*—beyond the rivalling webs of the word?
A *YOU* who are no speech, uttered or heard,
Nor tell, nor show—but in yourself assured.

Consider. Though the quivering vocal chords,
Their echoing outcomes, be indeed the swords
That cut all knots, divide and conquer all,
Carve out our universe, exalt us to appall,
Win all our victories, lose all our wars,

Create all values, settle so all scores,
Behind a sword a hand, behind the hand
The intelligential hierarchies stand.

Angelic? Yes. The Angels are a sketch
THEY made long since to comfort the sore wretch
Cast out of Paradise he knew not why
To start his long climb back into the sky.
A sketch indeed! Where missive, messenger,
Intercommunicants . . . commingled were:
Minds dreaming of themselves as elf of elf;
Mind picturing Itself before Itself.

It was not strange the sketch should give them wings,
Platonic emblems of celestial springs;
That Amor's bride too curious should be
And learn in exile what's the penalty;
The coming day rays up its light ahead,
Lights you whichever way you would be led.
So, though Psychologists disdainfully
Tear off our wings, crying, to set us free:

"These gleaming sails are but the flattering means,
(Theologic gear, Pythagorean beans!)
Whereby grubs flit and feed and lay their eggs,
By metaphor, beyond the reach of legs.
No Psyche more! Homunculus-theory, out!
Verbal behaviour's all it's all about."

Yet none the less for that, indeed, the more,
New growing wings these vaulting words outsoar.

Be not forgot, if we'd conceive a mind
The purest model in our speech we'd find:
Speech whose swift beat is borne upon our breath
Doing what it may to mitigate our death,
Taking the breezes blowing where they list,
Settling when they lapse, bidding the tryst,
Weeting unwitting of the how and why
Within the WHAT its words are wielded by.

I. A. Richards

II

For Ivor Richards

Yes, "all's behaviour—and the rest is naught."

And thus compressed
Into "the rest
Of all,"
A thought
Is surely neither bad nor wrong.

Poetry

Or right or good?
No, no.
Define
And thus expunge
The *ought*,
The *should*!
Nothing is *so*
(See History.)

Let not the strong
Be cozened
By *Is* and *Isn't*,
Was and *Wasn't*.
Truth's to be sought
In *Does* and *Doesn't*.

Decline
To be.

And call
Him neither best
Nor blessed
Who wrought
That silly jest,
The Fall.

(It was a Plunge.)

B. F. Skinner

Norman Mailer

By Diana Trilling

IN 1959, at the not very advanced age of thirty-six, Norman Mailer published what amounted to a grand view of his literary lifetime. In a single big volume, *Advertisements for Myself*, he not only reprinted virtually everything he had written except his three novels—and there are even excerpts from these—but also prefaced, or connected, his stories, essays, and journalism with an extended commentary in which he reported on his states of mind at various stages of his development as an author and public figure, on the reception given his work in the press and by his publishers, and on his present estimate of his earlier performances. A retrospective enterprise of such proportions is bound to tax the generosity of the public. It assumes, for one thing, that its audience shares the writer's own sense of his importance in the record of his period—which indeed it may, but no public likes to have this certification demanded of it. It also presents its author as if in the absolving perspective of history. And it requires of its readers enough grace to forgive, if they cannot welcome, the persistent self-reference inevitable in such a sustained task of self-evaluation. For someone of Mailer's age and present uncertain place in the American literary scene, the undertaking was perhaps ill-advised. By most of its reviewers, *Advertisements* was received reservedly, or with condescension, or irony. The compelling force of the volume, its demonstration of the courage and complexity of Mailer's talent, was slighted in the apparent desire of its critics to separate themselves from his recent questionable, even distressing, moral positions.

This is unfortunate, and it perhaps constitutes one of those occasions when criticism has failed to live up to its responsibility of open-mindedness and has not met its claim of being able to adjudicate between the valuable and the inconsequent, or shoddy, or even out-and-out wrong in a man's work. But one cannot overlook Mailer's share in confounding criticism,

even before the publication of *Advertisements*. We live, of course, in a period in which precocity is no longer regarded as it was in, say, Dickens' time, as the sign of a genius so deep-rooted and natural that it must surely augur long years of fulfilment. Instead, we take it as the portent of imminent extinction. While Mailer has neither stopped writing nor succumbed to the temptations of Hollywood, he has had his own gifted way of co-operating in our more cynical expectations for him as a novelist and of obstructing the development that might once have followed upon the early flowering of so much talent. After the intolerable triumph of *The Naked and the Dead*, he not only deserted the "naturalism" of his first novel but more and more moved from fiction to non-fiction, and of a polemical sort. And increasingly he has offered the public the myth of the man rather than the work of the writer. When we add to this the nature of his present doctrine and the degree to which he has met the challenge of modernity by disavowing that considerable part of his sense of life which is traditional in favour of the more subversive aspects of his thought, it is scarcely surprising that his career is now shadowed in dubiety.

And yet, whatever Mailer's truancy from the novel, or his self-mythologising impulse, or the violence he does to our traditional moral values, perhaps it is none of these but only the paradoxical character of his talent that finally creates his present equivocal situation. Where a writer exists in this much contradiction, the realisation of his possibilities is always chancier than it would be in a more unitary talent, and it would be hard to name a writer of our or any time whose work reveals a more abundant or urgent endowment which is yet so little consistent with itself—so much moral affirmation coupled with so much moral anarchism; so much innocence yet so much guile; so much defensive caution but such headlong recklessness; so much despair together with so im-

perious a demand for salvation; so strong a charismatic charge but also so much that offends or even repels; so much intellection but such a frequency of unsound thinking; such a grand and manly impulse to heroism but so inadequate a capacity for self-discipline; so much sensitiveness and so little sensibility; so much imagination and such insufficient art. Contradictions like these no doubt contribute to Mailer's appeal; but they also make for his limitations. And they describe a talent which necessarily lives on the sharp edge of uncertainty.

YET TO TRACE the paradoxes in Mailer is not to figure an unknown constellation. It is to experience the shock of recognition, for in the sum of his contradictions he bears a striking resemblance to present-day America. What distinguishes him, however, from other contemporary American writers who also express their culture even while they reject it is the depth to which he is shaken by the crash of modernity against the poor bulwarks of Western tradition and, even more, his driving need to turn this experience to social use.

FOR THE ADVANCED WRITER of our time, the self is his supreme, even sole, referent. Society has no texture or business worth bothering about; it exists because it weighs upon us and because it conditions us so absolutely. The diverse social scene is homogenised into a force we feel only grossly, as a source of our horror or terror or emptiness. The job of literature in our period is thus more poetical than novelistic—our advanced fiction neither anatomises the society that is nor conceives the society that might be; it deals merely with the massive brute social fact in its impress upon the individual consciousness. Where the novelist of an earlier day helped us to understand and master a mysterious or recalcitrant environment, the present-day novelist undertakes only to help us define the self in relation to the world that surrounds and threatens to overwhelm it. And this search for self-definition proceeds by sensibility, by the choice of a personal style or stance which will differentiate the self from, or within, its undifferentiated social context.

Mailer is no Balzac of the 20th century. And he is engrossed in his own grim effort of self-validation. But he conceives society as being quite as actual as the self, and as much to be addressed. It is not so much that he thinks of the modern world as a world of negotiable particulars. But he believes the social totality generates a dialectic between itself and the individual; it is therefore not merely to be endured in self-pity, it can be faced up to and changed.

For instance, in his fine story, *The Man Who Studied Yoga*—it is, I think, one of the best stories of our time and aesthetically Mailer's best-integrated piece of fiction—he has a would-be novelist protest to a friend that he “does not want to write a realistic novel, because reality is no longer realistic”; but Mailer's immediate riposte to this familiar statement is a description of the boring “petulance of their small voices” as the two young men luxuriate in their dreariness. Or, typically, he remarks of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*—which, typically, he had not yet seen—

I doubt if I will like it, because finally not everyone is impotent, nor is our final fate, our human condition, necessarily doomed to impotence, as old Joyce knew, and Beckett I suspect does not. . . .

And in *The Deer Park*, where he momentarily borrows Hemingway's symbol of sexual impotence for his narrator, Sergius O'Shaugnessy, he has this pre-date the opening of the story; once the novel begins, O'Shaugnessy is active enough.

MAILER'S TEMPERAMENT, in other words, is adversary not fugitive, hortatory not seismographic. Even his Hipsterism, concerned as it is with styles of personal being, rejects the premise of a self at the mercy of society, and refuses the sanctuary of sensibility. And no doubt this has much to do with the striking fact that, big as Mailer looms as a personality of the literary Left, one can name only a single serious critic of his general cultural persuasion, Norman Podhoretz in *Partisan Review* (Summer, 1959), who has written about him without embarrassment, as an author of stature. While he outrages conservative opinion by the ultimateness of his judgment upon modern life, he equally alienates radical literary opinion by his offence against the reality it is most disposed to acknowledge—that of our helplessness before Conditions.

“Hip is not totally negative,” Mailer declares, “and has a view of life which is predicated on growth.” And in the figure of the cool cat he projects an image of man as someone who, far from being inert before danger, is precisely poised for action against the enemy—it is a posture without great appeal to the contemporary distaste for “hostility.” And despite Hipsterism's emphasis upon the self, it places on the self the largest possible responsibility for the “collective creation” (as Mailer calls it) which is our culture. “If society was so murderous,” he asks, “then who could ignore the most hideous of questions about his own nature?” There is, of course, menace in so primary an enquiry, and Mailer has himself

been badly scarred in its pursuit. The question nevertheless carries us a salutary distance beyond our modern view of the individual as victim of a world he never made and cannot re-make.

MAILER'S ADVERSARY disposition recalls D. H. Lawrence, his predecessor in the line of literary minds dedicated to the renovation of society by means of a revolution in the individual consciousness. But of the two, Lawrence is actually closer to our present literary spirit, for he is not only the more subjective writer but also the more abstract. Society exists in his novels only as an aggregate of unspecified destructive conditions. The most poetical of social revolutionaries, he scorned politics in their troublesome concreteness. But Mailer has always carried the burden of social actuality of the intellectual '30s. He has engaged in politics—the politics of literary intellectuals—through his career, even in years when it has not been the literary fashion. At the time of the publication of his first novel, he was a Communist sympathiser and campaigned vigorously for Henry Wallace in that same year. Then, when Stalinism failed him, he turned to Trotskyism, and even to-day he still professes a modified allegiance to Marxism. For instance, in an interview with Mr. Richard Wollheim in England as recently as September, 1961, Mailer describes the Socialist preference which has remained to him from his old Communist commitment as now only a choice made *faute de mieux*, certainly with no passion of confidence. Of Marxism, however, he speaks like a man of honour who would not disavow a once-precious love. By and large, his criticism of Socialism is much the same as his criticism of modern civilisation: just as it is the ugliness and minimalism of modern life that make him dissent from civilisation and wish to prod it into a more conscious barbarism from which he can hope there will arise a revitalised way of personal being, just so he dissents from the ungenerosity, the uncourageousness, the lack of elegance and wit and charm, the personally minimal quality which he finds in Socialism. Yet despite his belief that the Marxist economic emphasis is not adequate to the present crisis in world affairs, he still calls himself a Marxist, albeit in the tone of someone submitting to a rather tedious test of his integrity. What Mailer implies is that in a world as ripe for reaction as he thinks ours is, a man sticks to his guns even though they are obsolete.

This is a far cry from Mailer's younger Marxism. In fact, the single live line of connection between the monolithic doctrine of a book like *Barbary Shore*, which came out in 1951, three years after *The Naked and the Dead*, and

his present merely vestigial Marxism is Mailer's continuing fear of political reaction in the democracies. For Mailer, as for so many Western intellectuals, political probity rests essentially in demonstrating one's anxiety about the threat from the Right; the abrogation of human rights under the dictatorship of the Left is allowed to disappear in a generalised disapprobation of Communism; or another way to put it is that the threat of armed conflict between the democracies and the Soviet Union overrides the principled opposition to Communist totalitarianism which, for the sake of convenience, as it were, is presumed to exist in a different moral context from any totalitarianism which might appear in the West. Even before the height of McCarthyism, as far back as his first novels, Mailer had arrived at this conviction that Fascism is not merely a potential in America as in any modern capitalism but, what is quite another order of political hypothesis, that it is the most coherent and dominant force in American society. And this fear is apparently no less compelling in Mailer to-day than it ever was: as late as the spring of '61, he published an open letter to Fidel Castro in which he addressed the Cuban dictator as "Brother" and elevated him to the rank of a born Hipster in order to sanctify his role as saviour of the Cuban workers and peasants from American Fascism. But then we must remember, of course, that John F. Kennedy also figures in Mailer's pantheon as a natural Hipster; at least he did at the time of his nomination.

Whatever our evaluation of Mailer's political predictions for America, the important point is that his work is not properly to be understood apart from his profound preoccupation with the idea that modern democratic man is about to yield his dignity, his freedom, his very manhood before the onslaught of political reaction. Second only to his religious zeal, it is Mailer's sense of himself as the heroic antagonist of a malevolent reactionary authority that has powered his fictional imagination.

"THE NAKED AND THE DEAD," published when Mailer was twenty-five, two years after his separation from the Army in which he served with credit in Leyte, Luzon, and Japan, was everywhere acclaimed as the best novel of World War II. And even as we read it to-day, knowing what the war brought as its aftermath of futility and desperation, it remains a remarkable document of the defeat inherent in any modern victory in war. Technically, his first novel advances no farther than Dos Passos, whose influence Mailer acknowledges in *Advertisements*. And in the main it relies on

fictional materials which were well-exploited in the first war. But it brings to a familiar subject the informing view of a new and radically altered generation. Our present-day belief that we stand outside the ordinary movements of historical evolution, the loss of faith in both the orderly and the revolutionary processes of social development, our always-increasing social fragmentation and our always-diminishing trust in individual possibility—it is these changes in consciousness that separate Mailer's war novel from the novels that followed World War I, as does, too, its drastically accelerated sense of time. Time is always running out on a soldier, in the midst of the inexorable tedium of his days, but this fact of experience is raised to a principle for Mailer's GI's. The hot breath of the future—one might better say, the hot breath of our own expiring day—broods over the pages of *The Naked and the Dead* as foul and stifling as the surrounding jungle air.

Although even before Tolstoy literature had of course represented the common soldier as the victim of a force he could neither understand nor control, it is only in our time that the Army has become identified with the irrational and destructive authority of society itself. *The Naked and the Dead* incorporates this death-dealing power in two characters, General Cummings and Sergeant Croft. Cummings is a man of the rising middle classes whose overweening personal ambition, bolstered by great gifts for organisation and by an imagination which knows no restraints of human feeling, leads him, for private reasons, to order a reconnaissance platoon on a tour of duty which must inevitably end in catastrophe. Croft is an illiterate Army regular, brave, skilful, and cunning, for whom the hieratical sanctions of war provide a nice measure of satisfaction of an unquenchable lust for conquest and blood. Cummings is sufficiently educated to bring the historical process and his own ambitions into working conjunction with each other; he has announced himself on the side of the future. He thinks of his men as the instruments of history and his own will—the two are synonymous. In Mailer's political scheme he is, simply, Fascism, and Croft is his eager though unconscious collaborator. The suffering men in Croft's platoon, who endure unspeakable torments as they struggle through swamp and jungle on Cummings' order and who, without voice in their fate, stumble mindlessly in their Sergeant's footsteps as he pits himself against the unscaleable heights of Mt. Anaka, are the masses of mankind who lack the individual or collective will to resist being propelled to annihilation. This Army which, in the name of historical necessity, captures, rules, and destroys the

common life of humanity, is modern society as Mailer sees it, and the presentiment of worse to come. And his introduction of Lieutenant Hearn, the intelligent, decent liberal whom Cummings cannot quite seduce and must therefore kill, completes his political indictment and prophecy.

THE INFLUENCE OF Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* is obvious in Mailer's management of his fictional forces in *The Naked and the Dead*—his crowded canvas of G.I.s together with their officers, and behind them their families, their wives, their girl friends. Where his own young genius announces itself is in his dramatic inventiveness and, even more, in his feeling—unmatched in our time, even by Hemingway in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*—for topography, for the look of the natural scene. As a matter of fact, the two gifts are associated: the most dramatic moments in *The Naked and the Dead* are precipitated by intensities in nature. Indeed, this loyal delight in physical truth is what gives *The Naked and the Dead* its extraordinary distinction. It is therefore of some interest that Mailer's first novel is, so far, his last to be set outdoors—it would seem that his fiction must now be enclosed in walls in order to reproduce the strangling effects of modern life.

The bald schematic structure of Mailer's novels, starting with the first of them, suggests a paraphrase of T. S. Eliot's comment on Henry James, that James had a mind so pure that no idea could violate it: of Mailer we can say that his novelist's mind is peculiarly violable by idea, even by ideology. In *The Naked and the Dead* there is at least the battle of man against nature to excite the artist in Mailer; but even here the contest between man and society has already begun to make him its ideological prisoner. Despite its brilliant evocation of atmosphere, and its integrity as a story of war, *The Naked and the Dead* takes its ultimate stand, not in art, but in doctrine. As much as it is a drama of human motives, Mailer's first novel is a political document—the testimony of a young Marxist, or proto-Marxist, whose experience of war confirms his worst reading of history. If, however, *The Naked and the Dead* is to be understood as Mailer's forecast of the dreaded victory of Fascism, we are bound to balk at the moral as well as political ascendancy of Croft at the end of the book. In Mailer's reading of the future, Croft is clearly the coadjutor of ruthless reactionary assertion. And yet, as the novel draws to its conclusion, he ceases to be one of its villains and usurps the place in his author's sympathies which we had thought was Hearn's. This curious shift in the moral focus of *The Naked and the Dead* perhaps adds to its

fictional interest, but it remains unexplained in Mailer's system of thought until we meet Marion Faye, the Hipster hero of Mailer's third novel, *The Deer Park*, in whose resemblance to Croft we discover the ominous political implications of Mailer's criteria for heroism.

MAILER's disillusionment with Communism followed rapidly on the publication of *The Naked and the Dead* but it was a break only with Stalinism, from which he moved to the Trotskyite Marxism of his second novel. In *Barbary Shore* (1951) Mailer attempted a new literary manner, and he paid dearly in popular success for disappointing a public eager for more of the seen and felt life of his first book. But as doctrine his second novel took up virtually where its predecessor left off—with liberalism dead and with the confusion and despair of the working classes sounding their dull prelude to the victory of the Right; the fact that, between 1948 and 1951, Mailer had himself lost faith in the Communism of Soviet Russia simply reinforced his earlier perception of the hopelessness of the American proletariat rescuing itself from its bad situation. What had happened to Mailer's politics in the three years between his first and second novels shows itself, in fact, chiefly in the changed perspective of the two books. Whereas in *The Naked and the Dead* the historical process is viewed in terms of its effect upon the general run of mankind, in *Barbary Shore* Mailer writes out of the dilemma of the defeated radical intellectual. The great battle of history is now fought out, not on the wide "proletarian" front where his first novel had located it, but on the intellectual left flank where Mailer had been isolated by his inability to maintain his trust in Stalin's revolution.

In Mailer's second novel, Fascism again trumpets its advance, but now it is personified in an F.B.I. agent named Hollingsworth—the collocation is not absurd to Mailer nor, presumably, to his putative readers. As befits the representative of a social force that is already licensed to execute the political dreams of a Cummings, Hollingsworth has none of the human attributes of a mere novice in tyranny like Mailer's General; for all his shrewdness and sharp-wittedness, Hollingsworth moves through *Barbary Shore* robot-like, directed by a power remote from the scene of his activities. His assignment in the novel is to track down a "little object" stolen from the State Department by a man named McLeod who had come to work for the Government after a considerable period as a Communist leader and then as a member of the Communist Opposition. When we meet McLeod in the surrealist

Brooklyn boarding-house which is the setting of *Barbary Shore*, even this recourse has failed him; he has nothing to which to dedicate himself except an intensive study of Marxism and the preservation of the Communist ideal which, detached from the Soviet reality which has betrayed it, persists in the form of the stolen token he has stashed away for use in an improbable future. As Mailer's highly allegorical story progresses, it turns out that this secret of our future rehabilitation is never recaptured by Hollingsworth, but the dark powers of reaction are none the less triumphant—the novel ends with Hollingsworth stealing, if not McLeod's key to the salvation of mankind, then at least his wife who, in *Barbary Shore*, stands for pretty much what Mailer's G.I.s did in *The Naked and the Dead*: the common life of humanity but grown distinctly less human and more sinister with the passage of the years. McLeod commits suicide—we are reminded of Hearn's suicidal conspiracy with his murderers in Mailer's first novel—and the young narrator of the book, an amnesiac who has wandered by historical "accident" into this epochal war and been cast as McLeod's confidant and disciple, is left the guardian of our small unpromising legacy of political hope.

In spite of its many funny passages, most of which centre around McLeod's mad wife, Guinevere, *Barbary Shore* is a web of fine-spun fantasies, as obscure as they are frightening, allowing us no connection with any recognisable world of feeling. Even Guinevere is drawn so outrageously and abstrusely that we can never be certain of the meaning Mailer attaches to this sharp, slobby lady who is always bartering or withholding her fly-blown sexuality in some strange, awful enterprise of personal advantage. It is only at the last, when McLeod's wife chooses to run off with Hollingsworth, that we begin to understand her place in the ideological scheme of the novel. Greed, cupidity, sloth, a sporadic and wildly misdirected energy, spiritless lust, stupidity, and mean ambition—these, Mailer is telling us, are what to-day define democratic man, or woman; and in a society in which the masculine principle is reduced to an automaton like Hollingsworth, a woman perhaps best symbolises our deteriorated situation. Guinevere is the civilisation—or, if you will, the American masses—with whom the revolutionary idealist has perforce had to align himself, and to whose partnership with Fascism his death must be witness.

McLeod dead, it is to a writer and intellectual—or Mailer's rather shadowy version of one—who has lost his memory except for vagrant recollections of having once been close to the radical movement, that our decent social

values are bequeathed. Lovett, the amnesiac narrator of *Barbary Shore*, is of course the precursor of the orphaned Sergius O'Shaughnessy, Mailer's spokesman in *The Deer Park* and again in his most recent story, "Time of Her Time." Both men are without tie to the past; both inhabit a universe without historical precedent or direction. Both of them announce, that is, Mailer's own thoroughly democratic stance of the self-made man, and his detachment from cultural tradition—Harvard to the contrary notwithstanding. Certainly in view of Mailer's obsessive interest in history, it is remarkable how little reference there is in his work to anything—political, philosophical, or literary—that happened day before yesterday; there is only now and to-morrow. Even when Mailer alludes to such towering figures as Hemingway or Faulkner in the generation before his own, they are introduced like parents into a gathering of contemporaries and friends. It is only when he writes about his literary siblings—Bellow, Styron, Jones, Capote, Vidal, Baldwin—that we feel the direct fire of his personal and literary judgment. Mailer's concern with history, in other words, is a concern with history-in-the-making. It is the Marxist's preoccupation with present-day action in the light of future necessity.

IMPLICIT IN MARXISM as a method of historical analysis there is always this assumption that if we correctly track the movements of history we can foretell future developments and put ourselves in accord with them; we can then aid prophecy in fulfilling itself. But in Mailer there is an unusual collaboration between the higher and lower arts of prognostication: the Marxist's prophetic faculty can regularly call upon the assistance of irrational intuition and even downright superstition. For example, in the early pages of *The Naked and the Dead*, when we first meet Sergeant Croft, he is playing poker and has had a run of bad hands, but firm in his belief that "whatever made things happen was on his side," he awaits the better luck that he is certain is in store for him, and soon he is the winner. Then, later the same day, Croft correctly predicts that before nightfall a boy named Hennessey will be dead, and Mailer tells us of this accurate pre-vision that it fills the Sergeant with a sense "of such omnipotence" and "such portents of power" that his life is as if magically altered. What happens, obviously, is that, by imagining himself in alliance with fate, Croft marshalls a will he otherwise lacks, which does indeed alter his fate. General Cummings, too, exemplifies Mailer's providential view of the relation between destiny and perspicuity: "The fact that you're holding the gun

and the other man is not," he explains to Hearn, "is no accident. . . . If you're aware enough, you have the gun when you need it." Thus the rationalistic Marxist, the wily General, and the ignorant superstitious Sergeant are all blood-brothers in their ability to envision and foster what anyway lies ahead. The Marxist determinist who charts the inevitable course of events so that we can put ourselves on the side of history is of the same family with the military tactician or the gambler whose correct hunch puts him on the winning side of fate.

The fate Mailer's Marxism foretold with the completion of *Barbary Shore* was of a society whose determining forces produced only its dissolution, never its reconstruction along the hoped-for revolutionary lines, and the publication of his second book therefore marked a turning-point in Mailer's career. If the alternative to a Fascist triumph was so remote from political actuality that it could be represented in an unnamed little lost object, then clearly the political solution had failed. From this point forward, Mailer has sought salvation elsewhere than in politics—in Hipsterism, a mode of being that will re-energise a worn and perverted civilisation irresistibly drawn towards reaction.

HIPSTERISM—or Hip, as Mailer sometimes calls it in a discrimination whose meaning is uncertain—is, we are told, an American Existentialism designed to return man to the centre of the universe and to bring the individual into direct and vital communication with the self and its needs. It is the doctrine which, enshrined in the place that Marxism once had in his system of thought, allows Mailer to probe modern society on a level deeper than that of political and economic determinism. Since it is manifestly man's destiny in our century to live with death and destruction, then

the only life-giving answer is to accept the terms of death, to live with death as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society, to exist without roots, to set out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self.

God is in danger of dying—this, in fact, is the "single burning pin-point of the vision in Hip." Because God is no longer all-powerful, man must take His place at the centre of the universe and become the embodiment of His embattled vision.

The original settler in this terrain which lies beyond the demands of society, the guide Mailer offers us in our unmapped journey of self-exploration, is not the dark primitive of Lawrence, but he is similarly alien to a white Protestant middle-class culture. He is the Negro;

and Mailer makes his most complete statement of the meaning of Hipsterism in his essay, *The White Negro*. The Negro, says Mailer,

has the simplest of alternatives: live a life of constant humility or ever-threatening danger. In such a pass where paranoia is as vital to survival as blood, the Negro has stayed alive and begun to grow by following the need of his body where he could.

So we, too, must know our impulse as it speaks to us of a true need of the self. "One must know one's desires, one's rages, one's anguish, one must be aware of the character of one's frustrations." And we must be prepared to act on the mandate of the self.

Whether the life is criminal or not, the decision is to encourage the psychopath in oneself, to explore that domain of experience where society is boredom and therefore sickness, and one exists in the present. . . . One is Hip or one is Square. . . . One is a rebel or one conforms.

Although *The White Negro* appeared in 1957, two years after *The Deer Park*, Mailer's third novel already contained in embryo the chief ideas Mailer would develop in his celebrated essay. Among the rebellious imperatives of the self, none is more exigent than sex, and surely the novelist who would treat this aspect of the modern consciousness not, like Lawrence, as a sacred lost essence but as existential fact cannot do better than to turn to Hollywood. But Mailer would seem to have come to the sexual theme of *The Deer Park* only secondarily, or even incidentally, while embarked upon a political novel along familiar simplistic lines, about a liberal movie director, Charles Eitel, who is blacklisted in the studios for his refusal to talk before a Congressional investigating committee but who then capitulates to the joint pressure of authoritarian government and ruthless finance and is reinstated in his job. It would appear, that is, that the sexual life of the movie colony originally served somewhat the same function as the tropical setting of *The Naked and the Dead*, of providing the context for a political drama, but that by the time Mailer was fully launched in his story, he realised that politics was failing him as the material of fiction, as it had failed him as a means of saving the world; Eitel's crisis of political conscience had turned out to be but a dim counterpoint to the larger crises of personal feeling in which he and the people around him were involved. The sexuality of Hollywood, once intended as merely the ambiance in which political hope is defeated, became then the drama itself—the account of a last-ditch fight on behalf of a personal destiny that could no longer be sought in politics.

CONSIDERING HIS SENSATIONAL material, Mailer is notably neutral in his report of the Hollywood sexual scene. This neutrality of voice must be understood, however, as an aspect of his æsthetic procedure rather than of his moral judgment. Although nothing could be less conventionally censorious than Mailer's investigation of the diverse sexual tastes and deportment of his stars and their hangers-on, of his movie moguls and their call-girls, *The Deer Park* is finally as charged with morality as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. For Mailer, as for Lawrence, sexual activity is never its own justification; its good is measured by the quality of the emotions it produces or expresses. The moral platform of Mailer's Hollywood novel reveals itself from behind the apparent irony of its epigraph—a quotation from a shocked description of the sexual life in the Deer Park of Louis XV—and is clearly argued in every line of Mailer's portrait of a society which manufactures the American mass sexual dream. Here is truly our jungle within walls, a miasma of desire fulfilled and yet always unfulfilled, as torturing as the burning, tangled, insect-infested jungle of *The Naked and the Dead*. The inhabitants of Mailer's Hollywood are wracked by a fever without cure; in their freedom from conventional sexual restraint there sounds the rattling of the chains of a bondage as awful as that of the Army. Only love and tenderness, only the terrible self-denying imperatives of feeling can release these victims from the tyranny of their unimpeded sexual compulsions—and their search for feeling is their futile struggle towards the unattainable heights of an emotional Mt. Anaka.

"The only revolution which will be meaningful and natural for the 20th century," Mailer has said, "is the sexual revolution one senses everywhere." And as one reads his account of the free sexual life of Hollywood, one might perhaps be misled into thinking that this is the revolution to which he is referring. But Mailer is more complex than this. While he recognises that the Hollywood life of free sexual impulse does indeed constitute a major rebellion against conventional sexual morality, his novelist's eye for truth has searched out the frenzy and emptiness in the lives of his sexual free-booters. Mailer has a predilection for last-minute heroes; just as Croft's sudden triumph at the end of *The Naked and the Dead* suggests the changes in feeling that Mailer was experiencing in the course of composing his first novel, so the replacement of Eitel by Faye as the most significant figure in *The Deer Park* indicates the dramatic evolution of Mailer's thought while writing his Hollywood novel. In Marion Faye we discover the distinction Mailer makes between a sexuality which, like that of the movie colony, appears

to be free but is really an enslavement, and the sexuality of Hipsterism which expresses a new, radical principle of selfhood. The difference is not one of behaviour but of consciousness. Whereas all the other characters in the novel, whether in their political decisions or their sexual conduct, follow the worn paths of consciousness laid out for them by an exhausted civilisation, Mailer's incipient Hipster hero has settled the new direction the world must take to save itself: it is the direction of purposeful, as opposed to purposeless, death. Faye is not God the Father, but he is unmistakably in training to be God the Son. Dying for us, the Hipster becomes our saviour; he is the resurrection and the life in a society of Eitels and call-girls who, will-lessly submitting to their poor destinies, can promise us nothing but further desperation and enervation.

FAYE IS A YOUNG, elaborately sadistic pimp who closely conforms to Mailer's anatomy of the white Negro several years later. He is totally bored by society, paranoically alert to danger, and he lives in an acute intimacy with the criminal and the psychopath in himself. This intimacy has, in fact, the charge of a mystical fulfilment: it is when Faye is most wholly possessed by his psychopathic needs that he achieves his strongest sense of spiritual exaltation. As jealous of his freedom of will as Dostoevsky's Underground Man, he finds the assurance of his autonomy in a strenuous rationalism—his reiterative reminder to himself that he is master of his fate, unconditioned by the moral values of his culture. And the question seems never to enter his or his author's mind whether a man is any the less a victim for being at the mercy of his own psychopathology rather than that of his society.

In Faye, then, we are introduced to the new hero of Hip. And yet he is of course not a wholly new figure in Mailer's work: he has made a premonitory appearance as Sergeant Croft in *The Naked and the Dead*. The single indispensable ingredient Mailer has added to Croft in creating Faye is the consciousness that his programme of cruelty and self-imposition has a large social and spiritual meaning. The passage of nearly a decade, in other words, has brought Mailer full circle to the exposure of the unresolved conflict which already existed in his first novel—between his overriding fear, in politics, of an authority which makes its law in defiance of the decent social values and his powerful attraction to the same authority in the personal or spiritual realm.

The conflict is not without literary precedent: the modern imagination apparently takes the heroic leap only at some cost in moral logic.

But writers like Lawrence or Yeats had the advantage, we now see, of living in a time when they were not required to give public account of their political preferences, and we can suppose that had Mailer been of their period instead of ours, he would have similarly avoided the predicament of presenting us with a hero not easily distinguishable from his named political enemy. He would have been able to evade the political consequences of consigning the future of civilisation to a personal authority morally identical with the dark reaction from which it is supposed to rescue us. Or, to put the matter in even cruder terms, he would not have exposed himself to our ridicule for offering us a God who is a Fascist.

But the situation has changed: to-day Mailer is guilty of a mortal fallacy in his moral-political thought. And yet, even as we trap him, we realise that our whole "enlightened" culture is caught in the same inconsistency. No less than Mailer, we all of us who accede in the moral implications of modern literature but continue to make our political choices on the basis of traditional moral values exist in ambiguity. It is quite a long time now since Conrad asked us to choose between his Kurtz and his "Pilgrims," between an heroic principle of evil and a seedy, hypocritical bourgeoisie that lacks the courage of its inherent malevolence. And once we received such an alternative as really our only option, we accepted the premise of a civilisation intolerable to itself; we concurred in the negation of the moral values on which we had established our enlightened political ideals. The very notion of a hero of liberalism, or a hero of anti-dictatorship, or a hero of social justice becomes absurd, even unimaginable, in a literature whose moral habitude it is to assign personal grandeur to the demonic and destructive. If Mailer's dual wish—to preserve us from the malign forces of political reaction but also to give civilisation another push towards the extinction to which it seems inexorably drawn—leads him into moral and political self-contradiction, he is not alone in this dilemma. It is the dilemma of anyone of high political seriousness who also identifies himself with the characteristic moral tendency of our literature.

AND THE MORAL TENDENCY of contemporary art is not isolated in our culture. Everywhere in Western society there is an erosion, if not an entire sweeping-away, of assumptions once thought secure, which takes place not at the behest of reason but by an undirected tide of feeling, by what almost seems to be a psychological mutation. The psychologists may not be noting the change but the novelists record it even when they are not always aware of the

significance in what they so circumstantially bear witness to. Where do we, where shall we, where can we derive our moral sanctions—from a failing tradition or from the wild free impulses of our racial infancy, from the Ego or the Id? This is the ultimate pressing question of our time, separating our historical period from any that came before it. And because Mailer not only knows the full force of the question but passionately dedicates himself to its answer, he transcends the follies and excesses which attend Hipsterism and claims his place in the forefront of modern writers.

OBVIOUSLY in Mailer's application to this ultimate issue, far more than in his politics, we discover his radicalism, just as it is in their deep involvement with this large moral-cultural tendency of our period rather than in their newly-fervid Socialism or their disenchantment with the democracies that we locate the radicalism of his literary contemporaries. For Mailer, as for the whole of a new literary generation, politics is to-day the least revolutionary aspect of social protest.

That, despite the political struggles which fed his moral imagination, Mailer's present moral radicalism came to him only gradually and from such emotional sources as have always nourished the traditional novelist is plainly indicated in his story, *The Man Who Studied Yoga*, written in 1952, shortly after the political disillusionment of *Barbary Shore* but well before the appearance of Marion Faye. Product of a moment of suspension between ideological engagements, this superb long story is singularly free of the restrictions imposed upon Mailer's fiction by his usual systematic thought. And it is also the warmest and most domestic of his fictional works, his sole excursion into the middle-class "normality" in which he, too, like the characters in his story, might have entrenched himself against the dangerous next steps in his development. In Mailer's brilliant description of Sam and Eleanor Slovođa we can examine the supposedly "mature" alternative our civilisation offers those of us who scorn "regression" to the barbarism of infancy. Sam, an ex-radical and novelist *manqué*, earns his living writing continuities for comics; Eleanor, a painter *manqué*, is a suburban housewife and the dutiful jargon-driven mother of two fine modern-reared children. The course of their lives of quiet-desperation-cum-psychoanalysis is interrupted (but only for a day while the children visit their grandmother) by the showing of a pornographic film at a party. After ten years of marriage, the Slovodas and their friends are responsible citizens and parents, responsible matrimonial partners, responsible and tender, even humorous

social companions. But they ache with the sexual longings that are never to be satisfied, and with the frustration of their dreams of themselves. They are the human counterparts of the charmless rational housing development their culture has provided for them. If this is what it means—and who can argue the flawless truth of what Mailer shows us?—to take our due place in society without violating the established decencies, then Mailer is surely right that conformity is purposeless death; but at this point in his career Mailer has no task for pressing the polemical issue. The story delivers its message without preachment and this is its triumph.

Sam Slovođa has turned to psycho-analysis for the deliverance that will never come, and from Mailer's subtly satiric references we can take it that the therapy is orthodox. In later essays, Mailer goes on to make Freudianism the target of some of his sharpest attacks on the modern dispensation; expectably enough, he by and large lines up with the Reichians. Jung, Fromm, Reich: it is among these analytical dissidents that protest now regularly seeks the psychology (and perhaps the parental support) with which to replace the Freudian psychology which it believes lives too cosily with the traditional attitudes of our society. Like Reich, Mailer rejects the idea of a self obedient to social law, and from Reich he takes his measure of instinctual gratification, the orgasm: it is in his orgasmic potency that the Hipster finds the best test of his capacity for self-realisation. As a matter of fact, Mailer's most recent story, "Time of Her Time," carries this criterion of personal release to the amusing point where, notwithstanding the ingenious twists Mailer makes on his sexual theme, the orgasm plays the same tyrannous role in assessing psychic well-being that sexual "adjustment" does in the mental-health culture that has sprung from Freudianism. In "Time of Her Time," O'Shaugnessy is returned to New York from Hollywood and Mexico. By day he teaches bull-fighting; his nights are for love-making with an endless series of Village girls who prey upon his swaggering maleness. The epitome of these predators is a graceless, tight-knit, Jewish college student who defies him to give her the sexual satisfaction she has not yet experienced. Challenged, O'Shaugnessy finally accomplishes his grim mission by fiercely forcing upon her a reversion to a more primitive zone of feeling than the female genital; stripped of her defences, the girl attains to womanliness—and she is not grateful. She must hit back at her despised master, or saviour, with her own bleak, ugly attempt to rob him of his masculine pride. The story ends with both partners in this loveless battle worn and battered, both equally the victims of their excoriated

egotism—and with the girl bound for the Freudian couch where, so Mailer has it, she has learned the tactics of assault which are her civilised protection.

“TIME OF HER TIME”* is the crudest of Mailer’s attacks upon Freudianism, and it is peculiarly anomalous that Mailer should deal with Freud this unworthily. For, although he is himself not aware of it, the fortitude which is implicit in the demand he makes upon the self is much closer to the Freudian than the Reichian temperament. Mailer’s heroic assertion and his insistence upon the controlling power of man’s consciousness have their antecedents not in the psycho-analysis that has diverged from Freud but in Freud himself; the Reichian psychology proposes a character considerably less valorous and self-contained. The heroism of Freud, however, was the heroism of endurance; he knew better than most the price that civilisation exacts in denied instinct, and tragically, resentfully, he was prepared to pay it. Mailer’s is the courage of non-acceptance; he refuses to sacrifice instinct to a civilisation which is itself so little removed from savagery. But perhaps because of Freud’s readiness to face into the issue as between civilisation and instinct, Mailer does, in fact, direct his criticisms not so much to Freud himself as to his disciples to-day, where he stands on firmer territory. The unwillingness of contemporary orthodox analysis to take account of the actualities of a culture in significant transition, its unacknowledged acquiescence in a moribund middle-class morality, its reluctance to treat with the human personality apart from the limitations of social imperatives—these are the grounds of Mailer’s adverse judgment upon present-day Freudianism. One could fairly put it that what Mailer attacks in Freud’s followers is their passive or neutral assent in a choice which, as Freud made it, had such harsh resonances.

* *Editor’s Note.* Only a few pages of this story are printed in the London edition (André Deutsch, 1961); the U.S. edition is complete. The “truncated version” was permitted by Mailer who wrote that he was “weary of fighting” with lawyers and publishers. “Besides, I do not know that it is my war. We have won victories in America, large ones. We can write with a freedom today we did not have in 1946. But we fought the dull slow stupid battles of compromise, and refusal to compromise, and a part of my generation used up a part of its talent to create a literary freedom for writers to come after them... I wonder aloud if the time is not come for the British writer to face the disagreeable notion that compared to us in America, he has been slack, has fought his battles with too little, and surrendered too often to those peculiar betrayals which are worked in the name of good taste, caution, and the public trust.”

Naturally enough, of the various excesses into which Mailer is led by his own option against civilisation, the most disturbing is his expressed tolerance of, even his partisanship with, extreme personal violence. And he is not speaking metaphorically; here, as elsewhere, he is announcing a programme of action. What is worse, he speaks of violence in a language of love learned in the moral culture he undertakes to dismiss in its entirety. For example, in a statement which he made in the course of an interview in *Mademoiselle* (February, 1961), he has this to say about a brutal gratuitous murder:

Let’s use our imaginations. It means that one human being has determined to extinguish the life of another human being. It means that two people are engaging in a dialogue with eternity. Now if the brute does it and at the last moment likes the man he is extinguishing then perhaps the victim did not die in vain. If there is an eternity with souls in that eternity, if one is able to be born again, the victim may get his reward. At least it seems possible that the quality of one being passes into the other, and this altogether hate-filled human, grinding his boot into the face of someone... in the act of killing, in this terribly private moment, the brute feels a moment of tenderness, for the first time perhaps in all of his experience. What has happened is that the killer is becoming a little more possible, a little bit more ready to love someone.

This is of course monstrous and intolerable. We recall, however, that the statement was made at a time of great personal stress, and we are relieved to counter to its enormity the modified terms in which Mailer, but a few months later, discussed the violence of Hipsterism with Richard Wollheim in England.

I don’t see the real choice as one between violence and non-violence. It’s rather between the violence of the individual and collective violence. ... [Whether or not protest needs to take such a total form as that of Hipsterism] depends on whether one thinks a society can solve its problems rationally. If one thinks it can, then hip will go nowhere. But if one thinks it can’t, and that barbarism is closer, and that violence is in the seed, then at least hip introduces the notion of art into barbarity.

We might reply to a formulation like this that barbarity is precisely where art is not and never can be; that art and civilisation are genetically inseparable. But no one who admits into the record of contemporary civilisation the savagery of Nazism, or the spiralling success of Communist totalitarianism or, at a perhaps absurd extreme, even the gruesome spectacle of professional wrestling, can evade the validity of the problem Mailer poses for us when he asks that we look at the collective violence we call our moral order and, in the light of what we

see, decide whether we can exempt the individual of responsibility for our degradation, and continue, as a culture, to feel morally superior to our collective conduct. While Hipsterism's conspiracy with the vicious in man's nature suggests a "cure" which certainly is little better than the disease for which it is prescribed, Mailer at least presses upon us an effort of honesty without which we live in moral delusion.

AND YET IS IT NOT ENOUGH that he tell us what we must learn instead of telling us what we must do?

Clearly, this is the chief pitfall Mailer has contrived for himself as a writer—his neglect of the metaphoric character of the literary endeavour. For it is here that his espousal of violence ceases to be a strategy by which we are shorn of the hypocrisies, and self-delusions with which we surround our participation in a violent civilisation and becomes so gross an offence against the decency we still cherish both in our personal and in our collective lives. But if Mailer's actualisation, even in his own conduct, of ideas that, for another writer, would remain simply figures of speech, has had its inevitable effect of nullifying some of the difficult truth with which he is dealing, it may also in the long run protect his radical insights from being so quickly and easily absorbed that we make no use of them.

The world doesn't fear a new idea. It can pigeon-hole any idea. But it can't pigeon-hole a real new experience.

This is D. H. Lawrence speaking, who produced a body of work which is entirely metaphoric. And Lawrence left the world, certainly not untouched by his urgent insights, but sadly unaltered in its main course.

BUT MAILER'S IMPULSE to break the metaphor-barrier and himself act out, or ask that we act out, his ideas would now appear to have another, much deeper source than his impatience with the ability of art to achieve its tangible miracle of renovation. Intense as his literary dedication unquestionably is, his religious mission is now infinitely more compelling. Just as he writes in order to preach the word of God, he acts in order to attain to God, by whatever thorny path. And when he invites us to follow his example he literally means us to join a religious crusade.

Even as a young writer and young Marxist, Mailer's vision carried him beyond a world of simply-defined or materially-determined notions of good and evil. We look back upon his first novel from our present vantage to see that

Sergeant Croft's ascent of Mt. Anaka must be interpreted as the ascent of the Cross, and that Croft's triumph at the end of *The Naked and the Dead* represents a transcendence not merely over his own poor character, as we would judge it, but over an inglorious mankind which presumes to pass moral judgment and which fails to realise that God may appear to us in the strangest of disguises. And similarly with Marion Faye: while so far we see only the stigmata, we can suppose that in the long novel on which Mailer is working, in which Faye is said to have a leading part, Mailer's Hipster will come into the fullness of his spiritual blessedness. Nor is Mailer's invitation to sin so that we may find grace an unfamiliar heresy. If there has always been missing from Mailer's writing any true perception of the mysterious circuitous paths by which literature accomplishes its improving work, undoubtedly this is because he has always been occupied with the mysterious circuitous ways in which God performs His work. His moral imagination is the imagination, not of art but of theology, theology in action.

This defect in Mailer's artistic imagination has many corollaries, of which the most obvious are his small fictional concern with the complexity and variety of human responses and, even more disabling, the absence of a prose adequate to the larger intentions of literature. If we were to conceive of Hemingway offering us his heroic choice and his disenchantment with the hollow idealisms of modern life in a language which was sufficient to propagate a doctrine but no more than that; which failed to be its own quintessential comment on the modern world and which exposed us to the crude manipulations of ideology, without those areas of retirement and indecision and even discordance which are so perfectly recreated for us in the subtle tones and rhythms of Hemingway's best writing—this would approximate Mailer's situation as a novelist. For the life-giving subtleties of style, Mailer substitutes a generosity of words. Like Thomas Wolfe before him, like Saul Bellow in his own generation, he has a giant energy of vocabulary with which he undertakes to make his discriminations of meaning. But his taut strings of noun upon noun, adjective upon adjective, intended to sharpen our response to reality, in fact sharpen only his own act of assertion.

Of some (superficial) aspects of his stylistic problem, Mailer is himself aware. Often in *Advertisements* he refers to his continuing effort to achieve a prose which will support his vision of modernity and forbid us our easy evasions and falsifications. But if, so far, his endeavour has largely missed its goal and indeed

has had the perverse effect of reinforcing Mailer's rhetoric of will, this is by no means an inappropriate outcome. To a greater extent than he perhaps recognises, Mailer is an anti-artist, deeply distrustful of art if only because it puts a shield between the perception and the act. His writer's role, as he conceives it, is much more messianic than creative. While it was in the very nature of Hemingway's literary vocation that even in the moment of his most urgent masculine assertion he was able to keep in abeyance the impositions of the merely personal masculine will, it is in the nature of Mailer's

social and spiritual vocation that he should wish to challenge, even personally dominate, his reader.

And if we listen closely, we perhaps hear his insistence as less the expression of personal authority than as a call to a time when religion was still a masculine discipline—a call, that is, to an Hebraic world, still moulded in the image of the stern father, Moses. From Moses to Marlon Faye, with a stop-over at Marx: Mailer's religious route is surely a strange one. But the braver efforts of culture are not always straight-away and simple.

August by the River

Hunched-up, muttering along the *quais*
 Of glacier, bus-ticket-blown, SW3,
 After one too many a *table d'hôte* meal
 Eaten alone with a book, I think of Jules
 Laforgue. As I zig-zag along beside
 The only river that openly solicits suicide,
 I think of St Barnabas, Addison Road,
 Only a couple of postal districts away,
 Where, it appears, he married a Miss Leah Lee.
 With my pockets stuffed full like confetti with telephone
 Numbers I'll never ring up, I stop and stare the moon
 Over Battersea straight in its diesel-fumed eye,
 (For I'm terrified stiff of the quiet in my *chambre meublée*.)
 And why should I think of Jules Laforgue and his bride?
 Because, by this stretch of the river—whose arms
 Offer their piss-yellow, typhus-ridden charms—
 Because its probably wiser and safer in this *quartier*
 To think of them, and not of you, or me.

P. J. Kavanagh

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NOTES & TOPICS

On Time, Age, and Cosmonauts

IN MIDDLE-AGE nostalgia is not just one æsthetic emotion among many: it is an ingredient of every occasion when beauty penetrates a thickening carapace.

Everyone is half-possessed by his private Golden Age; even, so I suspect, those whose childhoods were an agony of loneliness or hardship. ("Ah, when she *stopped* beating me! Has there ever been such joyful relief in later years?")

The valley through my window is brilliant with the early morning sun. Poignancy is the first and last element of my muted joy at this shining meadow between the woods. I don't remember, of course, an exact occasion, or exact occasions, when such a scene and time of day moved me as a child. What stabs the mind—"poignant" is one of those marvellous words whose original and half-buried meaning throbs like a kind of pun—what stabs the mind when I watch this meadow is more like the memory of a repeated dream than of any waking occasion long ago.

Yet it is, of course, the existence of past occasions in the mind which creates this dream-like sense of loss and beauty. And what complicates and exacerbates this valued emotion is that those distant occasions were all of them suffused with expectation and not at all with regret. I regret the time when beauty involved me in no regret.

It must have been this common, perhaps almost universal experience, which led to the multitudinous myths of a real Golden Age, set in history or before it. A harmless and appealing myth in many of its forms: in other forms a dangerous and misleading perversion. Even the childhood which we recall at these moments of poignancy is unreal in the sense that our minds have selected only the brightest colours of that many-coloured spectrum. How much less real are those many forms of "the good old days" which have been invented to justify a purely personal regret and sense of loss! This is a hypostatisation: the attempt to derive an intellectual construction from an emotional experience. "Because, in my middle age, my childhood gleams for me in unearthly colours, the world itself was better long ago."

Yet the conservative *emotions* are not merely excusable or legitimate: they are the necessary

and humanising reaction to the distress of growing old. This perpetual, almost dizzying play of the past on the present is what makes growing old not only bearable but a constant enrichment. This interplay is capable of frequent and various permutations: one of my own intentions is to experience, recognise, and register as many of these as possible.

LAST WEEK I came across the photograph of a youngish Dr. Goebbels. There could be no direct æsthetic emotion here, such as a sunny meadow does provide. Yet the two occasions produced reactions which were strangely similar. That particular face of Goebbels belongs to 1932 or 1933, early in the last stage of my "productive past." (For me nothing experienced after the age of twenty-two is capable of producing poignancy, or the true interplay of past and present.) That face of Goebbels! What a complex—an unseizable complex—of places, faces, smells, tastes, and emotions! From which seems to emerge the Midland railway station at Rugby and a great-aunt whom I certainly never saw there. With no incentive of charm or beauty that mean little face has produced an emotion which is æsthetic, significant, wryly pleasurable.

But I do not hanker for the dear dead days of Dr. Goebbels!

Politics are about what happens next, informed by what has already happened. The main thing about them is that they must be directly concerned with the future, and only indirectly, only informatively with the past. Personal nostalgia is a disastrous motive for political action, if only because this true and rich emotion is bound to become embittered when it is allowed to engage in a direct conflict with present reality. Nostalgia should illuminate and animate the present. If we use it to deny the present we are constructing a ridiculous opposition between phenomena which belong to different planes of experience. One cannot sensibly oppose a mountain with a dream, or an economic system with regret for the sunlight flashing on nanny's spectacles.

The opposite fault is the hypostatisation of the future which is indulged in by the more extreme utopians. Such people often seem to have inhumanly severed themselves not only from history but also from their own childhood. And since a politician should be fully human he ought at least to be *equipped* with regret and a sense of poignancy.

Marx wrote that "the social revolution cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future." He was wrong, for there is no poetry of the future and all revolutions have looked backward for their poetry.

But how difficult for a politician, or anyone

else, to hold the proper balance—to allow only the legitimate and enriching confrontations of past and present! And if the poet or artist must err he will do better to err in the direction of sentimentalising the past rather than in the direction of inventing the future. The past, after all, is *something*—even in a sentimentalised form—while the future is nothing at all. When young poets glorify the future they either leave it mercifully vague and undescribed, or they simply transfer into that non-existence something which they love and admire in the existing world of past and present. (Growing old is the discovery that the future did not exist after all.)

HAS ALL THIS BEEN NO MORE than an attempt to explain (though not to excuse) the revulsion I feel against capsules and cosmonauts? Let it be plain, in any case, that I feel hardly more kindly towards astronauts; and the very existence of these rival terms contributes to my disgust at the whole affair.

I feel, in any case, that it would be more honest to approach my revulsion in this way, emotionally and personally, than to rehearse once again the more or less familiar reasons for deploring a childish waste of energy and money.

The extreme achievements of technology have become increasingly alien to most people's everyday experience. Fifteenth-century armour, in its more extravagant forms, is already a property of science-fiction—of *our* science-fiction. Those steel monsters, with bird-cage helmets, have never been domesticated—have never taken their place in the familiar bric-à-brac of history. And what about this:

Their squat barrels, doubled by the recoil cylinders that grew on their backs like tumours, pointed their cavernous mouths upward. . . . The crews wearing padding over eyes, ears, and mouths lay flat on their stomachs ready for the firing which was done electrically at a distance of 300 yards. . . . The shells rose in an arc 4,000 feet high and took sixty seconds to reach their targets. . . . Men of the garrisons heard the shells descending with a screaming whistle . . . until the shells exploded upon them with deafening crash and the stolid steel heads smashed through the concrete. . . . Ceilings fell in, galleries were blocked, fire, gas, and noise filled the underground chambers; men became hysterical, even mad, in the awful apprehension of the next shot.*

Read in anything approaching a "normal" state of mind this, too, seems to belong to some mercifully unrealised and scarcely credible future. In fact it is a description of Skoda 305s bombarding the Liège forts in August, 1914.

* August 1914. By Barbara W. Tuckman. Constable.

Surely it was the wild, inconceivable disparity between this futuristic horror and any kind of normal peace-time experience which helped to drive the men mad. There is a limit to the possibilities of physical pain, which was reached, no doubt, by a flint spearhead twisted in the stomach. Those Belgian garrisons were not pioneers in their experience of pain, but they did experience a new degree of horror at the monsters which their own world had been *secretly* creating. (The frightful new artefacts of that war were a secret, in a sense, even from the men who worked on them. At night those men went home from the factories, and there they ceased to believe in the monsters they were helping to create. What is more the new weapons could have no emotional reality until they were used.)

It may be, of course, that some scientists, technicians, and skilled industrial workers really do fully inhabit the same world as the reactors, rockets, and space capsules on which they work. But I find this very hard to believe. For their *homes*, after all, look like anybody else's, and the notable fact about nearly all homes is that they are years and years behind the space-age. If we had known in 1932 that cosmonauts would be circling the earth in thirty years' time we would have invented futuristic homes—a whole changed scenery of the future—to suit this miracle of advanced technology. Yet in the room where I now sit there is no single object which might not have existed thirty years ago. Even the television set downstairs was *thinkable*—indeed had been thought of—at that time.

Perhaps my own house, in a fairly remote countryside, is untypical; but it is not old-fashioned in any bizarre or intentional way. There is nothing in this house to amaze by its quaintness even the inhabitant of a New York penthouse. And my domestic scene is, of course, one of staggering modernity compared with those which are familiar to the great majority of my contemporaries.

To many of us, then, the technological spearhead of the world which we inhabit is as remote and alien as those unimaginable futures which science-fiction writers have tried to imagine. And *we do not like* what is remote and alien.

I can't pretend that it is only the destructive possibilities of modern invention which appal me. I do not know how dangerous the space competition will prove to be in military terms. I am almost sure that it would disgust and alarm me even if there were nothing belligerent about it.

Because it is *premature*.

This is true in the obvious sense that the resources wasted on space exploration might have been, and should have been, devoted to the relief of human suffering on earth. But the pre-

maturity takes other forms; or at least it can be seen under different aspects. Most of us inhabit a world in which space exploration is not yet emotionally permissible. It does not belong to *our* time, or to *our* experience of space.

If, on the whole, I do feel a more immediate hostility to cosmonauts than to astronauts, it is not only that the cosmonauts have done "better." It is because the disparity between the astronauts and the society which created them is not so great as the disparity between Major Popovitch's capsule and his mother. True, the American space programme is every bit as premature in the context of world history. But the prematurity of the cosmonauts is grosser and more apparent simply because most Russians live in more primitive conditions than most Americans.

AND LET US HEAR NO MORE of the eternal spirit of man ever reaching to new heights... The world ought to be more grown-up than it used to be. We ought, by now, to have developed a better estimation of our priorities. We ought, to put it less arguably, to have a nicer sense of propriety—of what is fitting—of the movement of history as something which should proceed at a decent, or at least at a regular and more or less uniform pace. (I am not concerned with

whether history *can* proceed like that, but with whether we want it to or not.)

The Two Cultures? But it is too easy to see them simply as distinct academic disciplines. The real dichotomy is between, on the one hand, the domestic, the everyday, the intimate possession of an immediate and poignant past, and on the other hand, those waddling, Michelin-like figures which feed a nuclear reactor. (Take off their protective clothes and *they themselves* turn out to be tenders of rose-gardens with yellowing photographs on the mantelpiece of Edwardian grandparents.)

We can distinguish—I *think*—between the changes which have been more or less fitting, because more or less timely and necessary, and the changes which have been gratuitous, because premature and irrelevant. To abominate television sets, refrigerators, democracy, and the health service is the false application of a natural and true nostalgia. To find the advent of the "space age" premature, and therefore alien and repulsive, is the proper reaction of any sensitive man.

Perhaps. I think so. But perhaps, too, this simply shows the limits of *my* tolerance, the extent of *my* hardened arteries, diminished sympathies, futile craving to undo what is done and to restore what can never be restored.

Philip Toynbee

On Goethe

For a New Translation — By W. H. AUDEN

EVERYBODY knows that the thrones of European Literature are occupied by the triumvirate referred to in *Finnegans Wake* as Daunt, Gouty, and Shopkeeper, but to most English-speaking readers the second is merely a name. German is a more difficult language to learn to read than Italian, and whereas Shakespeare, apparently, translates very well into

German, Goethe is peculiarly resistant to translation into English; Hölderlin and Rilke, for example, come through much better. From a translation of *Faust*, any reader can see that Goethe must have been extraordinarily intelligent, but he will probably get the impression that he was too intellectual, too lacking in passion, because no translation can give a proper idea of Goethe's amazing command of every style of poetry, from the coarse to the witty to the lyrical to the sublime.

The reader, on the other hand, who does know some German and is beginning to take an interest in Goethe comes up against a cultural barrier, the humourless idolisation of Goethe by German professors and critics who treat every word he ever uttered as Holy Writ. Even if it were in our cultural tradition to revere our great

W. H. AUDEN has just completed (together with Elizabeth Mayer) a new translation of Goethe's *Italienischer Reise*. This is his introduction to the handsome illustrated (by Goethe and his friends in Rome and Naples) edition which will be published by Collins (London) and Pantheon (New York).

writers in this way, it would be much more difficult for us to idolise Shakespeare the man because we know nothing about him, whereas Goethe was essentially an autobiographical writer, whose life is the most documented of anyone who ever lived; compared with Goethe, even Dr. Johnson is a shadowy figure.

For those whose ignorance of German cuts them off from Goethe's poetry and who have an instinctive prejudice against professional sages, *Italian Journey* may well be the best book of his to start on. To begin with, there are hundreds and thousands of Englishmen and Americans who have made an Italian journey of their own and, to many of them, their encounter with Italy, its landscape, its people, its art, has been as important an experience as it was to Goethe, so that the subject-matter of the book will interest them, irrespective of its author, and they will enjoy comparing the post-World War II Italy they know with the pre-French-Revolution Italy which Goethe saw. (Speaking for myself, I am amazed at their similarity. Is there any other country in Europe where the character of the people seems to have been so little affected by political and technological change?)

Goethe did not go to Italy as a journalist in search of newsworthy stories, but some of the best passages in *Italian Journey* owe as much to journalistic good luck as they do to literary talent. While sketching a ruined fort in Malcesine he is nearly arrested as an Austrian spy; Vesuvius obliges with a major eruption during his stay in Naples; sailing back from Sicily, the boat he has taken is kind enough to get itself nearly shipwrecked on Capri; eccentric and comic characters cross his path, like the Neapolitan Princess with the outrageous tongue, the choleric Governor of Messina, or Miss Hart, the future Lady Hamilton, who seems—God forgive her!—to have invented the Modern Dance; a chance remark overheard leads to his meeting with the humble relatives of Cagliostro, the most famous international swindler of the time. Goethe is not usually thought of as a funny man, but his descriptions of such events reveal a real comic gift and, even more surprisingly, perhaps, they show how ready he was to see himself in a comic light.

TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL travel book, one must have an observant eye and a gift for description. Goethe held definite views about how things should be described, which are summed up in a letter he wrote in 1826 about a young writer who had consulted him.

Up till now he has limited himself to subjective modern poetry, so self-concerned and self-absorbed. He does very well with anything con-

finer to inner experience, feeling, disposition, and reflections on these; and he will deal successfully with any theme where they are treated. But he has not yet developed his powers in connection with anything really objective. Like all young men, nowadays, he rather fights shy of reality, although everything imaginative must be based on reality, just as every ideal must come back to it. The theme I set this young man was to describe Hamburg as if he had just returned to it. The thread of ideas he followed from the start was the sentimental one of his mother, his friends, their love, patience, and help. The Elbe remained a stream of silver, the anchorage and the town counted for nothing, he did not even mention the swarming crowds—one might as easily have been visiting Naumburg or Merseburg. I told him this quite candidly; he could do something really good, if he could give a panorama of a great northern city as well as his feelings for his home and family.

Goethe's own practice is peculiar and reminds me in a strange way of the a-literature of some contemporary French novelists. The traditional method of description tries to unite the sensory perception of objects with the subjective feelings they arouse by means of a simile or a metaphorical image. This Goethe very rarely does. On the contrary, he deliberately keeps the sensory and the emotional apart. He makes enormous efforts, piling qualifying adjective on qualifying adjective, to say exactly what shape and colour an object is, and precisely where it stands in spatial relation to other objects, but, in contrast to this precision, the adjectives he employs to express his emotional reactions are almost always vague and banal—words like *beautiful*, *important*, *valuable* occur over and over again.

THE DIFFICULTY ABOUT this procedure is that, by its nature, language is too abstract a medium. No verbal description, however careful, can describe a unique object; at best, it describes objects of a certain class. The only media for showing an object in its concrete uniqueness are the visual arts and photography. Goethe, of course, knew this, and said so.

We ought to talk less and draw more. I, personally, should like to renounce speech altogether and, like organic nature, communicate everything I have to say in sketches.

He also knew, of course, that this was an exaggeration. There are certain characteristics of things which are every bit as "objective" as their visual appearance and with which only language can deal. A drawing can show what something is at a moment, but it cannot show us how it came to be that way or what will happen to it next; this only language can do.

What gives Goethe's descriptions their value is not his "word-painting"—he cannot make us "see" a landscape or a building as D. H. Lawrence, for example, can—but his passionate interest in historical development—more than most writers he makes us aware of *why* things have come to be as they are. He always refused to separate the beautiful from the necessary, for he was convinced that one cannot really appreciate the beauty of anything without understanding what made it possible and how it came into being. To Goethe, a man who looks at a beautiful cloud without knowing, or wishing to know, any meteorology, at a landscape without knowing any geology, at a plant without studying its structure and way of growth, at the human body without studying anatomy, is imprisoning himself in that æsthetic subjectivity which he deplored as the besetting sin of the writers of his time.

GOETHE is more successful at describing works of nature than he is at describing works of art. Indeed, the reader sometimes finds himself wishing he had more often practised what he preached when he said: "Art exists to be seen, not to be talked about, except, perhaps, in its presence." One reason for this is, of course, that Goethe knew a lot about natural history and very little about art history. Another may be that the two kinds of history are different. Natural history, like social and political history, is continuous; there is no moment when nothing is happening. But the history of art is discontinuous; the art historian can show the influences and circumstances which made it possible and likely that a certain painter should paint in a certain way, *if he chooses to paint*, but he cannot explain why he paints a picture instead of not painting one. A work of nature and a great work of art both give us, as Goethe said, a sense of necessity, but whereas the necessity of nature is a *must*, that of art is an *ought*.

When, thirty years later, the first part of *Italian Journey* was published, the German artistic colony in Rome was outraged. Those whom he had not mentioned were offended, and the works he had failed to see and the judgments he passed on those he did made them say that he must have gone through Italy with his eyes shut.

This was unfair. Like everybody's, Goethe's taste had its limitations, owing in part to his temperament and in part to the age in which he lived. It seems that the Giotto frescoes in the Arena Chapel were not on view when he was in Padua, and we know that he tried to see them, but he deliberately refused to visit the Two Churches in Assisi. For Goethe there was no

painting or sculpture between Classical antiquity and Mantegna.

Yet, when one considers how little painting and sculpture and architecture Goethe had seen before he came to Italy, one is astounded at his open-mindedness. Though Palladio, for example, is his ideal modern architect, he shows far more appreciation of Baroque than one would have expected, more indeed than most of his successors in the 19th century. He started out with a strong prejudice against Christian themes as subjects for paintings and overcame it. Though to him the Apollo Belvedere was the finest achievement in Greek art, he learned to admire works of the archaic period like Paestum, and though he professes to be shocked by the grotesque villa of the Prince of Pallagonia, the zest with which he describes it betrays his fascination. And, in any case, Goethe made no claim to be writing a guide to Italian art; he tells us what he looked at and liked, he makes no claim that his judgments are absolute, and though he may, in our view, have overpraised some pictures, I do not think that he condemned any which seem to us really good.

ONE REASON WHY we enjoy reading travel books is that a journey is one of the archetypal symbols. It is impossible to take a train or an aeroplane without having a fantasy of oneself as a Quest Hero setting off in search of an enchanted princess on the Waters of Life. And then, some journeys—Goethe's was one—really are quests.

Italian Journey is not only a description of places, persons, and things, but also a psychological document of the first importance dealing with a life crisis which, in various degrees of intensity, we all experience somewhere between the ages of thirty-five and forty-five.

The first crisis in Goethe's life had occurred in 1775 when he was twenty-six and already famous as the author of *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Werther*. One might say, though it is a gross oversimplification, that the *Sturm und Drang* literary movement of which Goethe was then regarded as the leader stood for spontaneity of emotion as against convention and decorum, Shakespeare and Ossian as against Racine and Corneille, the warm heart as against the cool reason. Such a movement has often arisen in history and the consequences have almost always been the same; those who embrace it produce some remarkable work at an early age but then peter out if they do not, as they often do, take to drink or shoot themselves. An art which pits Nature against Art is bound to be self-defeating. What Kierkegaard called the æsthetic religion which puts all its faith in the mood of the immediate moment leads, first, to the "culti-

vation of one's hysteria with delight and terror," as Baudelaire put it, and, ultimately, to despair, and it brought Goethe to the brink of disaster. "I am falling," he wrote in April of 1775, "from one confusion into another." His father suggested a trip to Italy, but he did not go. At the beginning of November he was in Heidelberg; the young Duke of Weimar sent his coach and invited Goethe to join him; without a moment's hesitation, Goethe jumped in and was whisked away.

ONE WOULD NOT have expected a young poet, who was well enough off to do as he liked, to choose to become a civil servant at a small court when he could have chosen to go to Italy. That Goethe did so is proof of his amazing instinct, which he was to show all through his life, for taking the leap in the right direction. In the state he was in, what could rescue him from a meaningless existence was not freedom but a curtailment of freedom, that is to say, the curb upon his subjective emotions which would come from being responsible for people and things other than himself, and this was precisely what Weimar offered. With the exception of the Grand Duke and Duchess, who were only eighteen, Goethe was the youngest person at court, yet, a year later, he became a Privy Councillor and, in the course of the next ten years, found himself at one time and another responsible for the mines, the War Department, and the Finances of the Duchy. In addition to these duties and as a further defence against subjectivity, he began to study science seriously, and in March, 1784, he made an important discovery: he was able to show that the intermaxillary bone existed in man as well as in the other mammals.

Those first eleven years in Weimar were also the period of his platonic affair, conducted largely by notes and letters, with Charlotte von Stein, a rather plain married woman with three children and eleven years older than he. Again it seems strange that a man in his twenties and thirties should have been satisfied with such a "spiritual," uncarnal relationship; yet again, perhaps, it shows the soundness of Goethe's instinct. While, as a Privy Councillor, he was ready to take impersonal responsibility, he was not yet ready to take emotional responsibility for another person; what he needed at the time was emotional security without responsibility, and that is obtainable only in a platonic relationship, as to a mother or an older sister.

TO AN OUTSIDER, Goethe's life in 1786 must have looked enviable. He held an important position; he was admired and loved. Yet, in fact, he was on the verge of a break-

down. The stability which Weimar had given him was threatening to become a prison. Though it had enabled him to put *Werther* behind him, it had failed to give him any hints as to what kind of thing he should be writing instead, for, while he had come to Weimar to get away from *Werther*, it was as its author that Weimar had welcomed and still regarded him. His official life had had its remedial effect, but as public affairs were not his vocation, his duties were becoming senseless tasks which exhausted his energies without stimulating his imagination. His greatest gains had been in his scientific studies, yet here again Goethe was not a scientist by vocation but a poet; scientific knowledge was essential to the kind of poetry he wanted to write, but, so long as he remained in Weimar, his scientific researches and his poetry remained two separate activities without real influence upon each other. As for his Weimar friends, he was beginning—this is one of the misfortunes of genius—to outgrow them. Herder, to whom, since he was a young student in Strasburg, he had owed so much, had nothing more to teach him and, probably, Herder's schoolmaster temperament which liked to keep disciples was beginning to irk him. So far as Charlotte was concerned, Goethe seems to have been, like Yeats, a man in whom the need for physical sexual relations became imperative only relatively late in life; by 1786 it had.

When the idea of escaping from Weimar to Italy first occurred to him we shall never know. He tells us that the longing for "classic soil" had become so great that he dared not read the classics because they upset him too much, but his actual decision to go may have been taken at the very last moment. On August 28, he celebrated his thirty-seventh birthday in Carlsbad, where a number of the court were taking the waters. Two or three days later, all the party except Goethe and the Grand Duke returned to Weimar under the impression that Goethe was going on a short geological excursion into the mountains. After they had gone, Goethe asked the Duke for leave of absence and, at three in the morning on September 3, jumped into a coach with no servant and hardly any luggage, assumed the name of Möller, and bolted. He does not appear to have been very explicit about his plans even to his sovereign, for the Duke cannot have received his letter, dated September 2, until after he had left.

Forgive me for being rather vague about my travels and absence when I took leave of you; even now I do not know quite what will happen to me.

You are happy, you are moving towards an aim you wished and chose for yourself. Your domestic affairs are in good order and in a good

way, and I know you will permit me now to think of myself. In fact, you have often urged me to do so. I am certainly not indispensable at this moment; and as for the special affairs entrusted to me, I have left them so that they can run on for a while quite comfortably without me. Indeed, I might even die without there being any great shock. I say nothing of how favourable these circumstances are at present and simply ask you for an indefinite leave of absence. The baths these two years have done a great deal for my health and I hope the greatest good for the elasticity of my mind, too, if it can be left to itself for a while to enjoy seeing the wide world.

My first four volumes are complete at last. Herder has been a tireless and faithful helper; now I need to be at leisure and in the mood for the last four. I have undertaken it all rather lightly, and I am only now beginning to see what is to be done if it is not to become a mess. All this and much else impels me to lose myself in places where I am totally unknown. I am going to travel quite alone, under another name, and I have great hopes of this venture, odd as it seems. But please don't let anyone notice that I shall be away for some time. Everyone working with or under me, everyone that has to do with me, expects me from one week to the next, and I want to leave it like that and, although absent, to be as effective as someone expected at any moment....

THE ONLY PERSON Goethe knew in Rome, and by correspondence only, was the German painter Tischbein. Through him Goethe was introduced to the German artistic colony, and, though he keeps telling Weimar how lonely he is, it is clear that he was soon leading quite an active social life. But in Rome he was free, as in Weimar he had not been, to choose his own company, and his anonymity, though it did not remain a secret for long, seems to have been respected. Whether by his own choice or because Italians were difficult to get to know, he stuck pretty closely to his fellow countrymen. Whereas in Weimar most of his friends had been older than he was, those of whom he saw most in Rome, with the exception of Angelica Kauffmann, were all younger. When Goethe was thirty-seven, Tischbein was thirty-five, Kayser, Kniep, and Schütz thirty-one, Moritz twenty-nine, Lipps twenty-eight, Meyer twenty-six, and Bury twenty-three. Only one of them, Moritz, was a writer and an intellectual, not one of them was a poet or a clergyman, and, again with the exception of Angelica, they were all poorer than he. For Goethe at this period in his life, such a company had many advantages. Before he came to Italy he had seen very little original architecture, sculpture and painting, Classical or Renaissance, and he had the common sense to realise that before he could

understand and appreciate it properly, his eye would have to be educated. He also wanted to learn to draw, not so much for its own sake—he never fancied that he might become a serious artist—as for the discipline; drawing was the best way to train his mind to pay attention to the external world. To train his eye, to learn to draw, he needed the help of professional artists, which most of his Roman friends were. Secondly, if he were to develop as a poet, the best companionship for him at this point, failing a real literary equal like Schiller, was an unliterary one or, at least, a company whose literary judgments he did not have to take seriously. They all knew, of course, that he was a famous poet and Angelica was a sympathetic feminine audience, but they did not pretend to be expert judges of poetry, and if they objected to anything, he could disregard their criticisms in a way that he still found it difficult to ignore the criticisms which came from Weimar. He acknowledged a debt to Moritz's prosodical theories, but otherwise the fresh stimuli to his imagination came, not from conversations or reading, but from watching the behaviour of Italians and living in the midst of Italian nature, the climate, shapes and colours of which were so utterly different from the northern nature he had known hitherto. How necessary it was for Goethe to remove himself from the literary atmosphere of Weimar can be guessed from his letters about his new version of *Iphigenie* and *Egmont*, for it is clear that Weimar preferred the old versions and did not care for his new classical manner.

LASTLY, an artistic, somewhat bohemian, foreign colony in a great city gave him a freedom in his personal life which would have been out of the question at a provincial German court. As he gives us only his side of the correspondence, we have to infer what the reactions of Weimar were to his whole Italian venture. It seems fairly clear that they were hurt, suspicious, disapproving, and jealous. If the reader sometimes becomes impatient with Goethe's endless reiterations of how hard he is *working*, what a lot of *good* Italy is doing him, he must remember that Goethe is trying to placate his friends for being obviously so radiantly happy without them. One of the reasons why his account of his time in Rome, particularly of his second stay, is less interesting than the rest of *Italian Journey* is that one feels much is happening to Goethe which is of great importance to him, but which he declines to tell. There is no reason to suppose that Goethe's life in Rome was anything like Byron's in Venice, but it is impossible to believe that it was quite so respectable, or so exclusively devoted to higher things as, in

his letters home, for obvious reasons, he makes it sound. The difference between the over-refined, delicate, almost neurasthenic face of the pre-Italian portraits and the masculine, self-assured face in the portraits executed after his return is very striking; the latter is that of a man who has known sexual satisfaction.

IF GOETHE DID NOT TELL everything, what he did tell was true enough. He did work very hard and Italy did do him a lot of good. Any writer will find *Italian Journey* fascinating for what Goethe says about his own methods of working. He would compose with extraordinary rapidity and in his head—if he did not write it down at once, he often forgot it—and under any circumstances: there cannot be many poets who have been able to write while suffering from seasickness. His chief difficulty, partly out of a temperamental impatience and partly because he kept having so many ideas and was interested in so many things, was in finishing a work. He starts re-writing *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and becomes distracted by the thought of another play, *Iphigenie in Delphi*; he is walking in the Public Gardens of Palermo, planning a new play about Nausicaa, when suddenly he is struck by an idea about the Primal Plant, and Botany chases away the Muse.

And he has so many unfinished pieces. When at last he finishes *Iphigenie*, begun in 1779, there is *Egmont* waiting, begun in 1775. He finishes *Egmont*, and there are two old *Singspiele* to re-write. These done with, he takes out the yellowed manuscript of *Faust*, which is eighteen years old, and adds a scene or two, and he departs from Rome with the nine-year-old *Tasso* to re-work while travelling. And he does all this in the midst of social life, sightseeing, collecting coins, gems, minerals, plaster casts, taking drawing lessons, attending lectures on perspective and making botanical experiments. If to read about such energy is rather exhausting, to read about a man who is so enjoying himself is enormous fun.

WE HAVE TRIED to produce a translation, not a crib. A crib is like a pair of spectacles for the weak-sighted; a translation is like a book in Braille for the blind. A translator, that is to say, has to assume that his readers cannot and never will be able to read the original. This, in its turn, implies that they are not specialists in his author. On the one hand, they probably know very little about him; on the other, their appetite for scholarly footnotes is probably small.

The translator's most difficult problem is not *what* his author says but his tone of voice. How

is a man who thought and wrote in German to think and write in English and yet remain a unique personality called Goethe? To offer a translation to the public is to claim that one does know how Goethe would have written had English been his native tongue, to claim, in fact, that one has mediumistic gifts, and, as we all know, mediums are often rather shady characters.

The circumstances under which *Italian Journey* was written, put together and published present a special problem. Most of its contents are based upon letters and a journal written at the time, but it was not until twenty-five years later that Goethe set to work to make a book out of them, and the third part was not published until he was almost eighty. A compilation of this kind involves editing, and it must be admitted that, as an editor, Goethe did not do a very good job. If a man writes two letters at the same time to two different people, it is only to be expected that he will repeat himself a little, and if at the end of an exciting and exhausting day he hurriedly jots down the events in his journal, it is natural enough if there is some disorder in his narrative—what should have come first comes as an afterthought, etc.—but if he decides to make a book out of such material, one has a right to expect him to cut out what is repetitious, to rearrange what is chaotic and clarify what is obscure.

Even in the first two parts of *Italian Journey*, there are places where Goethe has been careless. For instance, he presents his visit to Cagliostro's relatives as a passage from his journal, dated April 13 and 14, 1787. But suddenly, without warning, the reader finds him referring to events which did not take place until 1789. What Goethe has actually done is to print, not his original journal, but a talk about Cagliostro based on it which he gave in Weimar in 1792. As for Part Three, one can only conclude that Goethe handed the material over to his secretary without re-reading it and that the secretary was too overawed by the great man to suggest any corrections.

We have seen fit to do some editing ourselves. One previous English translator, an Anglican clergyman, omitted all favourable references made by Goethe to the Roman Catholic Church; we have confined ourselves to stylistic matters. We have cut some passages which seemed to us unduly repetitious and some allusions to things which were known to his correspondents but would be unintelligible to a reader without a lengthy note, and, here and there, we have transposed sentences to a more logical position. We have also omitted the whole article *Concerning the Pictorial Imitation of the Beautiful*. Our official excuse is that the ideas in it are not

Goethe's but Moritz's; our real reason is that it is verbose rubbish and sounds like a parody of "deep" German prose.

To those who regard such tinkering as sacrilege, we can only cite the authority of the Master himself (*to Streckfuss, 1827*).

If the translator has really understood his author, he will be able to evoke in his own mind not only what the author has done, but also what he wanted and ought to have done. That at least is the line I have always taken in translation, though I make no claim that it is justifiable.

Beyond Pressure Politics

IAN WALLER's provocative and well-informed article [ENCOUNTER, August] on some aspects of pressure-group activity raises in an acute form many problems which have long worried professional students of government, and to which no obvious or easy answer can be given. So long as the modern State has it in its power to confer wealth on some and deprive others of their livelihood by administrative action which must always have some element of the arbitrary in it, individuals and interests that may be affected by such decisions are bound to try to see that they go in their favour. Nor, as the Soviet press often reminds us, is this problem unique in capitalist societies. At best, we can hope to remedy proved abuses; the problem itself is inescapable.

When then would we classify as abuses and where would we seek for cures? It is obvious that what worries Mr. Waller is not the possibility of simple corruption which always exists in some measure, but which in a healthy society can be kept in check by the ordinary operations of the law. Nor, provided the laws are obeyed, should we worry too much about the morals of public relations firms—they have a job to do and provided they keep within the law must choose whatever methods seem most appropriate to further their cause. If I had the money to mount a campaign to prevent a road from being run across Christ Church meadow, I can think of few methods of pressure that I should be reluctant to use.

What does concern Mr. Waller, and rightly, is the dubious no-man's land where Members of Parliament and other persons with special public responsibilities may appear to be allowing their views to be swayed by considerations irrelevant

to the merits of the issues. Most of the cases cited by Mr. Waller fall into this category. But I am not sure that the most helpful way to regard some of the activities listed is to appeal to "Victorian standards of rectitude in public life." Those standards applied to a very different situation and one which was itself quite unlike that of the previous century, when the British government, though deeply admired by most forward-looking men abroad, tolerated a degree of identification between public and private interest which we react to with horror when it appears in some newly emancipated polities on other continents.

The "Victorian" standard rested upon a set of social and political assumptions that no longer apply and that cannot be restored. Government itself was limited in what it attempted and the fields in which direct pressure for self-interested ends was forthcoming were consequently comparatively few. It was assumed that Parliament would consist of men for whom rewards were to be found in membership itself, or in prospects of office rarer than now. No-one was paid to be an M.P., and no-one without a private income could afford to sit. Mr. Robert Blake's forthcoming biography of Disraeli is likely to throw further light on the part played in that eminent Victorian's early career by the need for money with which to pursue it. It is taken for granted in Trollope's political novels that if a young man has no money and cannot find an heiress to marry, politics are not for him.

To earn money in some fields was sometimes possible and permissible; but we have made this increasingly harder, so that the House of Commons today is a place for full-time politicians living often on salaries that could only make sense if they were thought of as part-time. It is all very well to say that it would look better for M.P.s to entertain tycoons rather than the reverse; but how many can afford to entertain at tycoon standards, or at any standard? Or, as Ian Waller suggests, to travel and learn about the world whose problems confront them in so much more continuous and complicated a fashion? Dons and other intellectuals are also obliged to accept foreign hospitality, even that of foreign governments—what is the alternative? Are they corrupted thereby?

We have also moved away from some Victorian austerities at a time when a modest comfort costs more to maintain; and the burden of our educational system upon middle-class incomes is not to be underestimated. This again makes the public service relatively unattractive and not only from the parliamentary angle. More worrying than ex-Ministers going into industry is the seepage of top civil-servants; and once this becomes accepted as normal in mid-career,

another basic change in our Victorian institutional pattern will have to be faced.

No doubt if we paid M.P.s and civil servants according to the standards of private industry, some of these problems could be solved. But the public mind is so conditioned to having part-time legislators and dedicated and austere bureaucrats that no proposals would meet with stiffer resistance. If we have one set of ideas and institutions, and a new set of circumstances, there is bound to be trouble. Our public services and our academic and scientific worlds accept a degree of egalitarianism which makes nonsense in the world of business: no wonder that when business, science, and government are inextricably mixed it is hard to be certain about values.

WHERE I DISAGREE a little with Mr. Waller is in his section on the activities of foreign and Commonwealth governments. Propaganda is a part of international relations and we ourselves are not backward in it, and sometimes not unskilful. Our government also spends a good deal of money and energy on bringing over and entertaining influential foreigners, including politicians and journalists, presumably with the hope that they will see the British case on matters of controversy in a more favourable light. The same task may be performed at a more or less academic level. Mr. Waller can hardly be unacquainted with the work of Wilton Park, whose Academic Advisory Council boasts his own editor as a member. If we may cultivate West Germans (and others) why may not East Germans cultivate us? Mr. Waller draws the line, I think rightly, at the kind of pressure which takes the form of holding out economic advantages (national or personal) as political bait. But what we are up against here is not so much a lack of moral sensibility on the part of some M.P.s or businessmen as a lack of political understanding. And this, where the M.P.s are concerned, is far more serious; for after all, politics should be their primary concern.

The fact is that everyone who has had anything to do with East-West contacts at any level—diplomatic, business or “cultural”—knows that there is nothing more difficult for the non-expert to grasp than the East’s subordination of all other considerations to the ultimate political end. One may be invited to expound an

abstruse branch of learning to one’s Soviet colleagues, and find oneself asked to sign a “peace appeal.” What wonder, then, that what starts as perfectly legitimate trade should end up as pressure for a diplomatic objective? And other totalitarian or near-totalitarian régimes even of non-Marxist or anti-Marxist inspiration will act in just the same way, and show an equal unconcern with western protestations that “business is business” and nothing more.

BUT THIS COMES BACK to the central point of this comment. Not only is it doubtful if we can get along with our present treatment of the remuneration and conditions of service of Members of Parliament; it is also doubtful whether we can afford too many of the kind of Members we at present get. In as far as Parliament is responsible for the future of this country in a difficult and dangerous world one needs M.P.s who are not only vividly aware of domestic problems, but also capable of understanding the external world. It is difficult to know what is going on in Russia or China or to penetrate at all deeply into the vast currents of social and ideological change that are transforming most of the globe; but it is not impossible. To study East-West relations as a real problem no more makes one a “cold warrior” than to study the problems of nuclear war makes one a bloody-minded protagonist of universal slaughter. Most of Mr. Waller’s chronicle of sins seems to me to spring not from doubtful morals on the part of those condemned, but from their quite indubitable ignorance. A teacher may be pardoned for thinking that ignorance can nearly always be tackled; but in cases where it is wilful, or where the mental equipment of the individual concerned is too low, there are limits to what one can do. And in these cases one can only hope that the electoral process will come to serve us better. In Mr. Waller’s terminology, the only safeguard against the P.R.O. is the first-rate M.P. What he has revealed is that there are too few of them; it is a pity that our laws of libel, and perhaps our increasing readiness to see them invoked, make it impossible for members of Mr. Waller’s profession to do more to bring this home to the voting public, and in particular to the active members of constituency parties—in all three parties, I regret to say—with whom the choice of parliamentary candidates still rests.

Max Beloff

Thoughts in Red Square

By Walter Laqueur

RED SQUARE, an unending stream of visitors: guided tours, delegations, and even some individual travellers, buses from Huddersfield and Hamburg, Citroëns and Mini-buses, Uzbek cotton-growers and Sverdlovsk steel-workers, Russians hurrying to work and foreigners photographing the entrance to the Kremlin.

The square got its present name (*Krasnaya Ploshchad*) in 1662; much of the time since it has been the centre of Russian history. It is, of course, in no way red; the name (*krasny*) is probably derived from beautiful (*krasiv*). In the Middle Ages it was a fair-ground and market-place; the Cossack rebel, Stenka Razin, was executed here, and Peter I established the first Russian theatre around the corner. After the great fire of 1812 the square was completely reconstructed; Minin and Pozharsky, who saved Moscow from the Poles, were commemorated with a statue, and Lenin and Stalin with a mausoleum. After the revolution all the big parades and meetings took place in the Square. Stalin's name has since been erased; in the great red brick Lenin Museum they now have a picture of Martov, the Menshevik leader, but none of the late "Father of the People." At midnight all Russian radio stations switch to Red Square to transmit the chimes of the Kremlin.

Moscow is not exactly beautiful, yet it has always had a special place in the hearts of the Russians. Chekhov's three sisters dreamed day and night of "going to Moscow." Can one imagine English poets raving about London as Russian poets do about Moscow? Lermontov, for instance: "I loved her like a son, like a Russian—with a strong passionate, delicate love"... or Pushkin: "*Moskva, kak mnogo v etom zvuke...*" (Moscow—how much there is in this sound...). Visitors from Voronezh, Murmansk, and Nizhne Tagil still come to Moscow to admire the tall buildings and the new fashions, the big open spaces and the shops. For them Moscow is the pattern of things to

come. It sets the fashion, intellectual and otherwise; it is the centre of Russia, and Red Square is still the centre of the capital. (Curiously enough, it was a French Communist, Pierre Courtade, who wrote the first novel about it last year.)

The Square is bordered by the Cathedral of St. Basil (now a bit decrepit and supported by much scaffolding), GUM (Russia's biggest store), and the Kremlin. Ten years ago there was a standard scene in Soviet fiction: on a rainy, cold, November evening the hero, with or without wife or girl-friend, crossed the empty Red Square and looked towards the towers of the Kremlin. Everything was shrouded in darkness but one window gleamed with light—the omnipotent, omniscient Father of the People was still busy, never relaxing in his work for the good of his children. Now, the Kremlin is open to the public during the day. Most of the political decisions are taken, I surmise, not here but at the Central Committee of the Party at Staraya Ploshchad (about half a mile away), or in Khrushchev's own office nearby. The Kremlin is now mainly used for receptions and conferences, most of the real work being done elsewhere.

STANDING IN THE QUEUE in front of the mausoleum: Is de-Stalinisation likely to progress much further? The answer seems to be a qualified "no" for the near future. The generation of the over-45's, in so far as it was politically active, was involved, one way or another, in the Stalin era, and it simply cannot disavow its own past altogether. In addition, there is some popular pro-Stalin sentiment, a fact frequently ignored by foreign observers. "He did win the war"—"he started the experimenting with rockets"—"he built up our heavy industry." After all, the purges and the trials mainly affected the political élite and the intelligentsia. Of course the peasants were hit by the collectivisation, and Russian working-class life was drab and dreary under Stalin; but on the whole the workers suffered less than the rest. I am not, therefore, surprised to find a considerable residue of pro-Stalin feeling among the workers. The Stalin cult was all-persuasive and lasted for many years, and much of this propaganda was sincerely believed; de-Stalinisation has been half-hearted. Generally speaking, the working class seems to be, in its cultural taste and its views

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on *byt* (one of those untranslatable Russian words—"way of life"?), a conservative factor in Soviet life. In pre-revolutionary Russia the class-conscious worker was always described as the students' natural ally in the political struggle. To-day, workers' brigades are used to re-educate obstreperous or wavering students and young intellectuals. The sterling qualities of the industrial workers are contrasted with the feckless intellectuals and their political shilly-shallying. The party leadership may be largely working class in origin, but a very large percentage now has higher education; their circumstances have changed much from those of the working class. It is a real problem and nobody believes that "leadership by rotation," as suggested in the last party programme, will work. The working class is still the official *fons et origo* of Soviet power; it certainly is not a revolutionary factor in Soviet life. In addition, there is a great and apparently growing gap between the way of life of the working class and that of the intelligentsia. This is a general phenomenon and may be inevitable, but it must be of particular concern to political leaders in this country. The differential in wages and salaries is small; a young workman usually earns more than a young intellectual. But their interests, the way they behave, and the way they spend their free time are very different indeed. Communism, we are told, will overcome the differences between intellectual and manual labour; for the time being the two classes certainly develop apart. Khrushchev realised this when he demanded that every student work for two years in industry or agriculture in order to be accepted at a university. Some say that this scheme is now being gradually abolished because it did not work. Anyway, it did not make the students like the factories any better, and "intellectual" is still a derogatory name in many circles. The students, on the other hand, complained of the cultural desert experienced in factory life, and even more in the kolkhoz. The blue badge denoting that its bearer has graduated from an institution of higher education is worn defiantly by hundreds of thousands.

"Why should anybody want to draw attention to his education?" I asked a Russian friend. "And why not?" he replied.

Russians and Germans

TRAVELLING by tram or trolleybus from the centre to the airport, or westwards via Volokolamskoe Chausee, one soon passes a pillar marking the furthest advance of Hitler's Panzers in the winter of 1941. The destroyed bridges have been repaired, the factories have been re-built, and there is little to bear witness to the bitter fighting that once raged here. But

the war caused a trauma as far as the Russian attitude to the Germans is concerned. Stalin had consistently underrated Hitler; from 1933 to 1939 he was merely the "tool of German monopoly capitalism"—the aggressive nationalist and popular essence of National Socialism was never understood. Nor, indeed, is it to this day; not a single serious book on Nazi Germany has been published in the Soviet Union since 1945. As for the Germans themselves, this period remains for the Russians a piece of *unbewaeltigte Vergangenheit*. From 1939 to 1941 Hitler was almost an ally; small wonder that the invasion of 1941 came as a tremendous shock.

Even now Soviet propaganda is curiously schizoid on the subject of Germany. It is always stressed that in the age of the H-bomb and rockets, West Germany has been reduced to military impotence, that it would simply be wiped out by a few bombs. But on other occasions "West German revanchism" is described as a formidable danger to the security of the Soviet Union. A special anti-German library has just been established, sponsored by the State Political Publishing House. Adenauer is described as slightly worse than Hitler, and Willy Brandt (whose anti-fascist record is rather more consistent than that of most Marxists around here) is called a "Gestapo agent."

The East Germans, admittedly, are hardly more liked. One misguided soul in charge of cultural exchanges between East Berlin and Moscow, had decided to bring an East German army choir and orchestra to the Soviet capital. It was not an outstanding success, to put it mildly. Russians appear to be allergic to German uniforms.

Most of this feeling, however, is limited to the older generation. Yesterday I went to Gorky Park and listened to some community singing. It ended with a song new to me: "*Nabat Buchenwalda*" (The Buchenwald Tocsin). But the boys and girls, mostly around seventeen or eighteen, sang it as if it was a very funny song indeed. One should not blame them, it doesn't mean anything to them—this, at any rate, was the explanation given by a Russian friend of mine. "My generation would react differently," he said. He was born in 1924; only two of the boys from his class at school returned from the war.

Books

FOR THE LAST DECADE one school of visitors has used the condition of plumbing as a yardstick to measure Russia's progress. It is a legitimate complaint, and it doesn't even have a funny side; a *Clochemerle* is unlikely ever to be written in Russia. But the tourist who looks down on the Russians because

of their poor sanitation may, in turn, be held in contempt by people here for his lack of interest in the "higher things of life." How many books has he read during the last month? And what kind of books? The number of bookshops is truly astonishing and still growing. They hawk books, like fruit or vegetables, in the streets, and people queue in front of the stalls. All this, we are told, is the achievement of Soviet power, which historically is not quite correct. Russians were always avid readers; the number of titles published in 1913 was as great as that of France, Britain, and the United States combined.

Tremendous business goes on in the second-hand bookshops at the Kuznetski Most and the Arbat. A friend bought an early *Leninski Sbornik* the other day, edited by Kamenev, for a pittance. I saw books by Max Weber, Milyukov (!), and Henry James (in an American paper-back edition) offered for sale. Absurd prices (up to £30) are fetched by such books as *L'amour est mon péché*, *Mademoiselle Fifi*, or a battered volume of Casanova's *Memoirs*. There seems to be considerable interest in Catulle Mendès and Octave Mirbeau and their contemporaries. But the most sought-after author seems to be a Frenchman by the name of Count Salias of whom, I am ashamed to confess, I have never heard. I am told he wrote novels on high life for domestic servants, and his books now fetch considerable prices. So does Elsa Marlitt (1825-87, *Das Geheimnis der alten Mamsell*), who fulfilled a similar function in Wilhelmian Germany and who gave her name to a whole literary genre (*Marlitteratur*). All kinds of people, all kinds of tastes. In Russian bookshops the prospective buyer cannot approach the shelves himself, he has to ask the sales-lady, and the answer is usually *nyet*. In some Russian cities a revolutionary experiment is now being tried whereby the buyers are actually permitted to browse for themselves. This is evidently part of the gradual transition to Communism, in order to give the citizen a greater feeling of social responsibility.

In a shop on Teatralny Proyezd, I found a copy of Kliuchevski's post-doctoral work of 1865 on the reports of foreigners on the Moscow State. Kliuchevski was the greatest Russian historian and his book is, I believe, out of print. I paid only a few kopeks; clearly he is no match for Count Salias.

Foreigners

WHO HAS been here for almost three years, is getting very restive. Some other foreign residents are showing unmistakable signs of claustrophobia. Of course, they are free to take long walks (not always practical in

winter), to go to the theatre and cinema, and, only with permission, to travel outside the 25-mile limit. The diplomatic season will soon start; there will be five or six invitations to cocktail parties, dinner parties, and for the full global round of national holidays. Unfortunately, there are always the same faces.

True, Russians feel a bit freer now and may talk to foreigners on occasion; they will certainly not shy away from your table in the restaurant—especially if no other places are available. But a real conversation, let alone a close relationship, is still impossible. After all, every foreigner is a potential spy (or so they say in the little booklets put out with monotonous consistency by various publishing houses). Some distinguished Russian writers, composers, and scientists are invited to some of the Western embassies once or twice a year. But I suspect that it is done all too often simply in order to report home that so-and-so had been to dinner; motives on the Russian side may be similar. Perhaps I am doing them an injustice, but the value and importance of these meetings is somewhat doubtful.

The Russian suspiciousness towards foreigners is, of course, nothing new. Herberstein, Mayerberg, Possevino—in fact all the 16th-century diplomats and visitors complained of it. There were armed guards in front of the embassies then as now, and the diplomats were virtually held prisoner in their homes. "Whoever visited a foreign embassy for whatever reason drew very strong suspicion upon himself." When Mayerberg complained that all his letters to Vienna were intercepted and destroyed he got no answer. When Herberstein complained that he had been given an empty house without furniture or even beds, he was told that this was the usual procedure. Some of this, of course, has changed, and the Soviets feign a fastidiousness about diplomatic etiquette, though there are still difficulties as regards housing. The Soviet Foreign Ministry apparently has a limited number of flats at its disposal. Newcomers are often told to stay with their families in a hotel. There is a wall, albeit an invisible one, around the foreigner; if he does not want to run into trouble he had better not try to outsmart the authorities.

There are fifty non-Communist Western journalists in Moscow and in many respects they are, of course, much freer than they would have been under Stalin. And yet I do not envy them. They have to act as their own censors, but many would prefer the old system. Now, if somebody oversteps the boundaries he is warned, or attacked in the local press, or simply thrown out—as was the case with the *Newsweek* correspondent last August. In the present

"climate of uncertainty," as it affects both Russians and non-Russians, it is exceedingly difficult to stay on the right side of the unwritten law. Collecting news is not at all easy; everything has to go through official channels. An application to visit a Soviet school may take several months to be considered, and the reply may well be negative. In a way it is preposterous to expect detailed political coverage and analysis from Moscow. There is much room for social reportage of a different kind altogether; so many aspects of Soviet life are quite unfamiliar to the Western reader. By and large the Western press does not seem to be interested in this; some of the correspondents complained about this to me, often criticising their editors or their readers, sometimes both.

IN RECENT WEEKS there have been many attacks against journalists who came to the Soviet Union for short visits. Yuri Zhukov singled out Harrison Salisbury and a *Figaro* correspondent, whereas two lesser known Moscow journalists have belaboured Patricia Blake (of *Life* magazine) in *Izvestia*. In Stalin's times all foreigners, and journalists in particular, were considered "spies"; foreigners noted the price of a pair of shoes or a pound of cucumbers and thus amassed economic intelligence. To-day, the situation is more complicated and Zhukov has applied a new concept—the "semi-legal collection of information"—in his article in *International Life*. What he means is this: Every foreign visitor is bound to notice certain things during his stay in the Soviet Union even if he does not speak to a single Russian. If the correspondent compares the quality and the price of Soviet shoes or cucumbers favourably with Western products, nobody is likely to take umbrage. If, on the other hand, he should draw unfavourable comparisons his activities become "semi-legal," something in the nature of an ideological diversion—for do not his comments reflect unfavourably on the régime as a whole? The two writers in *Izvestia* have suggested that Western correspondents who have published critical accounts on the Soviet Union should not be readmitted. One can easily imagine what will happen if their advice is taken by the authorities—and if the West, as can only be expected, retaliates. Stalinism, one is constantly reminded, is not yet a thing of the distant past.

Youth

A PROCESSION approaches from Sverdlov Square—a trumpeter in the small car leading, followed by several buses of singing boys and girls in white blouses and red ties: out-of-town Komsomol—or more probably the Pioneers, its younger section—on an excursion

through Moscow. "*Molodaya Gvardia Rabotchikh i Krestian*"—they are singing the old song of the Komsomol about the young avant-garde of workers and peasants, which brings back memories of the 'twenties: the storming of Perekop and Kronstadt, how the Komsomol fought always and everywhere for the "general line"—collectivising agriculture, working at Magnitogorsk, building the city named after itself, Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur. It reminds one of the generation of the children's republics, of Kostya Ryabtsev and the Rabfak (the workers' faculties) of endless discussions about free love, revolutionary literature, and art.

Pavel Kortchagin (in Ostrovski's *How the Steel Was Tempered*) was the great hero of that period. Paralysed and incurably ill, he continued his political activity up to his last breath. Pavel Kortchagin's contemporaries are now grandfathers and grandmothers, if they were lucky enough to survive the war and the purges. In the high command of the party there are now many who, born after the 1917 revolution, joined the party only during World War II. And the youngsters in the white shirts were just three or four years old when Stalin died—for them this period, too, already belongs to the distant past.

There is much speculation about the character of this new generation, "the Russia of tomorrow." Nothing perhaps is more dangerous than generalisations about this, for "youth" is not a finished product. The Soviet student of 1962 is very different in his mental make-up and outlook from his predecessor twenty, or even ten, years ago. "Too different," their elders complain. The teachers say that these youngsters are not at all accustomed to receiving an order without discussion. Parents complain that their sons and daughters want to enjoy themselves; they get very impatient when faced with the "what-was-good-enough-for-us . . ." argument. They take Soviet reality (and to a certain extent Soviet ideology) to be self-evident; there are little jokes about "Diamat," one of those party subjects learned by rote, but in the end they will take over unthinkingly much of the doctrine, which does not mean that they are content with Soviet society as it is now. They are impatient with bureaucratic chicanery, they want a better life and more freedom, they don't think Russia is developing and changing fast enough. They earnestly believe that less control plus *izobilie* (abundance of goods) equals Communism; people who do not believe in Communism seem more than slightly daft to them. How can anybody be opposed to "the good life"? They are more interested in literature and the arts than in ideology, more in their professional training than in politics. "Only the

less savoury type," it is said, choose politics as a career these days.

Some of the manifestations of youthful ferment are by now well under control. The poetry recitals at Mayakovski Square, described by Manya Harari in the July *ENCOUNTER* have now been discontinued. The youth cafés such as *Molodozhnoe* and *Aelita* have been taken over by the Komsomol, an organisation that evokes no more enthusiasm among the young generation these days than the Ministry of Fisheries. But in the long run it will be difficult to control the stirrings of the post-Stalin generation, which are by no means limited to young avant-garde writers, composers, or painters; they do speak a "different language" from that of their parents. The decision, just taken, to discontinue the Russian-language edition of *Molodezh Mira*, the organ of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, as well as the magazine of the (Communist) International Union of Students, are two more straws in the wind. Soviet officials had sharply criticised the independent line of their subsidiaries who *inter alia* had dared to denounce Ulbricht's wall. And the editor of the I.U.S. organ has just stated that "for about ten years now the I.U.S. and the editors of *Vsemirnoe Studencheskiye Novosti* have been struggling against censors in various countries who dispose of our publications as they please...."

A SCENE IN THE MOSCOW Writers' Club: Any *putyovka* available for travel abroad? Yes, certainly: Cuba 1,100 rubel, Ghana 850 rubel. Anything else? No.... The enquirer pulls a face indicating that he does not think highly of Cuba and Ghana as holiday lands and withdraws. It is difficult for outsiders to imagine how much the Russian intellectual wants to go abroad, even if only for a short time; and he is not thinking of Prague either. Soviet tourism, never very developed and almost always partaken of in groups, has now been cut to between 10-20 per cent of what it was in 1961. According to the semi-official version, this is the result of lack of foreign currency; the real reason is not difficult to imagine. The few lucky people who get the passport and the *putyovka* are envied by their friends and neighbours and the whole neighbourhood talks about their good fortune. They prepare themselves for many months beforehand, as people in the 18th century did for the grand tour, brushing up their English, French, or Italian; they are starved for fresh impressions and therefore less blasé and much more observant than the average Western traveller. Later they will have to report back in great detail to all their friends and acquaintances about "life abroad." There are some professional travellers—Ehrenburg is perhaps the best known. As

for the rest, a trip to London, Paris, or Rome is a momentous event, equal in importance only to a flight to outer space.

The feeling of isolation from the West is very strong, and the authorities are aware of it. They provide various *ersatz* outlets: trips to Eastern Europe are now less difficult than they used to be; there are international Communist gatherings, like the Helsinki Youth Festival, which may provide at least the illusion of a real international meeting of minds. Non-Communist newspapers are unobtainable, but the new kiosks in the streets give an impression of great variety at first glance: how many papers there are, how many different colours, languages, alphabets! A closer look reveals the basic uniformity: it is the same newspapers, from Havana to Ulan Bator. True, the attentive reader of, say, *Unità*, *Drapeau Rouge* (of Brussels) or the Polish press will learn a great deal not contained in *Pravda*, e.g., the explosion of a new Soviet H-bomb near Novaya Zemlya, the death of Hermann Hesse. People queue for these papers. The London *Daily Worker*, I am certain, could sell three or four times as many copies in Russia as it does in Britain; there is a great interest among the hundreds of thousands who now have a working knowledge of English. But the editors should not congratulate themselves too soon; these are not personal admirers of Palme Dutt or John Gollan; they want to know about literature and television in Britain, about new films, fashions, and sport. And even the *Daily Worker* conveys, at least to them, a glimpse of that hostile and decadent (read: strange and fascinating) world—"the West."

Patriotism

THE COSMONAUTS landed safely earlier to-day, and Yuri Levitan now reads out the declaration of the Soviet government. (During the war he used to read Stalin's more important orders of the day.) But hardly anybody seems to me to be listening; there is evidently sales resistance to the loudspeakers. Everybody is proud of the achievements; there has been an upsurge of patriotism over the last year or so. An adept of content-analysis would probably find that the word *Russian* is again more often used: "We Russian people...", "The great Russian scientist..." This, in a way, is only natural. There is cause for pride, but it creates a number of problems. For there seems to be a resurgence of nationalism among the minorities too—in Georgia, the Baltic republics, and Central Asia—but not of "bourgeois" Nationalism. It is a new phenomenon altogether—the people in Tiflis, Riga, and elsewhere merely want to manage their own affairs, with minimum interference from Moscow. It is a development

parallel to the centrifugal trend in the world Communist movement. Which brings me to the "Sino-Soviet conflict."

It takes some time to realise how little the Chinese are in evidence in Moscow. There are receptions for North Koreans, one meets a Mongolian army delegation and even visitors from North Vietnam. But where are the Chinese? The bookshop in Gorki Street sells the same cheap scrolls that were there two and three years ago; Chinese fountain pens and textiles are sold in Kirov Street. But there is little about China in the press; there are hardly any translations, no visiting artists, no Chinese films shown; there are few if any Chinese students around and one simply does not hear of anybody who has lately been to Peking or Canton. Moscow and Peking seem to have agreed to disagree. But how long is it likely to last? Meanwhile, some scarcely veiled ideological tug-of-war goes on. The last number of *Questions of Philosophy*, for instance, berated Mao for "some incorrect interpretation of the theory of antagonistic contradictions." There may be more serious trouble brewing under the surface in the less rarefied sphere of economic planners, military attachés, and intelligence agents.

ANY REPORT from Moscow, however cursory and impressionistic would be incomplete without reference to the most important problem of all. Yet nothing is more difficult than to comment on just this topic from the Soviet capital. The broad lines of Soviet policy are known from countless publications and statements which can be studied at greater leisure in Paris, London, and Washington. As for the actual decision-making, the internal discussions preceding it, the whole complex of Army-Party-State relationships, the formation of foreign policy goals and the deliberations as to how to attain these targets, that is a sealed book to all foreign residents and to most Russians as well. I am not suggesting that all aspects of Soviet life can be studied more profitably from the outside; this, after all, is not 1952 when *Pravda* contained all one needed, or could hope, to know about the Soviet Union. Since Stalin died something in the nature of a popular opinion has gradually come into existence. It was, and continues to be, a long drawn-out process and nothing is easier than to belittle its political impact. If "public opinion" in the Soviet Union is not merely anti-war but opposed to even minor military adventures, this too could be explained as a reflection of the policy of the Presidium. Some foreign observers

believe that Soviet policy has realised that there is no "military overtaking" in the nuclear age, and that it has given up any hope for further advances in Europe. But the feeling of a mission that has to be fulfilled, remains; so does the willingness to take greater risks than the West in the political struggle. Soviet foreign policy does not embark on foolish or suicidal adventures any more than the West does. But the only way out of the dilemma would be the establishment of an international order which would perpetuate the *status quo* in world affairs and thus undermine the universalist character of the communist historic mission. No doubt: there has been a certain amount of ideological erosion. The movement has become less missionary and certainly less universalist. But these are perspectives for the more distant future, meanwhile Moscovites, as everybody else, have to live not only with the bomb, but with the permanent danger of escalation and even the blind force of accident. "No human activity has a closer connection to accident than war," Clausewitz said. It is, to put it mildly, an uncomfortable thought and people here seem to be aware of it as much as anybody else.

STANDARD OF LIVING: It has increased during the last two years; the selection of goods in the shops is wider, prices, too, have gone up—between 10 and 20 per cent I would estimate. There were the usual shortages in Moscow in the spring, but one should not overrate this. The shortage in the supply of tomatoes will not affect the balance of power; steel production will (and Russia has, at any rate for one month this summer, produced more steel than the United States). The price structure is always difficult to understand; a child's hat costs as much as two fairly good cameras. For the price of a pair of ladies' sandals one can buy a whole library of L.P. records (thirty-five, to be exact).

KARL MARX: Since the twenty-second party congress the "cult of personality" has found a new victim. *Okhotni Ryad* has been re-named *Prospekt Marksa*, so has the Mokhovaiia, Teatralni Proezd, and the underground station nearby. On Sverdlov Square a big statue of Marx has been put up, the first in Moscow. Stalin is now blamed for having neglected this. A new Marx-Engels Museum has just been opened, and the two founders of scientific socialism are now celebrated as precursors of space travel as well. The father image has been replaced by the grandfather image.

Diary of a Librettist

WHEN it was first suggested to me that I should adapt Heinrich von Kleist's *The Prince of Homburg*, I hesitated.

I had always admired Kleist and knew his *Prince of Homburg*, though I had seen it only once on the stage, in French translation, in the Paris production by Jean Vilar... *Le Prince de Homburg*. Gerard Philipe, as the Prince, was all sensibility, radiance, humility. He was a French Prince—Prussia, Germany, were far away. One could not but fall in love with the piece. But how would one feel when Brandenburg became Brandenburg once again, the roaring cannons that recall the Prince to life awakening sinister associations?

I belong to a generation which has learned not only to distrust a people which abuses its classical writers for political ends, but also to distrust the writers whose work lends itself to such abuse. I thought of Brecht's poem "On Kleist's *The Prince of Homburg*":

*Oh Garten, künstlich in dem märkischen Sand!
Oh Geistersehn in preussisch blauer Nacht!
Oh Held, von Todesfurcht ins Knien gebracht!
Ausbund von Kriegerstolz und Knechtsverstand!
Rückgrat zerbrochen mit dem Lorbeerstock!
Du hast gesiegt, doch wars dir nicht befohlen.
Ach, da umhalst nicht Nike dich. Dich holen
des Fürsten Büttel feixend in den Block.*

*So sehen wir ihn denn, der da gemeutert,
mit Todesfurcht gereinigt und geläutert,
mit Todesschweiss kalt unterm Siegeslaub.*

*Sein Degen ist noch neben ihm: in Stücken,
Tot ist er nicht, doch liegt er auf dem Rücken
mit allen Feinden Brandenburgs in Staub.*

*

*That garden set in Brandenburg's bleak sand;
That spectre-haunted night of Prussian blue;
That hero, grovelling in the face of death,
Warlike and cringing, servile and brave by turns,
Back-broken by the treacherous laurel wreath!
You won, but your commander disobeyed;
So, victory snatched from you, must submit
To follow where the grinning gaoler leads.*

*We see our hero now, no more defiant,
Purged and refined by dint of mortal terror,
Death's sweat on him beneath the laurel bough.*

*His sword's still at his side: but shattered now.
Still he's not dead: but, prostrate in the dust,
He's one with all the foes of Brandenburg.*

INGEBORG BACHMANN is the well-known Austrian poet and novelist. Hans Werner Henze's opera was first performed in Frankfurt earlier this year, and is being presented in London by the Hamburg State Opera this month.

But I remembered also some remarks of Heinrich Heine—no less passionate an enemy of servility, injustice, and national arrogance—I had read in his *Berlin Letters* of 1821: "It has been decreed that Kleist's *Prince of Homburg* shall not be performed on our stages... In our literary salons the play continues to be a bone of contention. For my part, I am convinced that the very Genius of Poetry must have composed it..."

A STRANGE PLAY, THIS, which can be charged with libertarianism as well as servility! What are its hidden springs? Why this ambivalence? What is its meaning for us now? Exegesis and explication are fated, it seems, to fall short of their target. Perhaps Henze's music will succeed in giving a new name and shape to the message of the play.

There is in this play—all of whose scenes are set in the night, or at dusk or dawn—an all-pervading lucidity and luminosity, springing from utter clarity of language, and the presence of a freedom which can dispense with rhetoric, being contained in the language. There is not in the play—and this, I think, has before now passed unnoticed—a single true villain, a single character capable of baseness or foul intrigue. There is no fate, nothing inevitable or irreversible, no necessity. The Prince, surely, is the first modern protagonist; not limited by fate, but determining his own fate, he inhabits a world of the utmost fragility. He is close to our predicament. No longer the conventional Hero, the complexity of the modern ego is one in him with all mortal creatures' pain; he is, as Kleist remarked of himself, "a man inexpressible"—a dreamer, a sleepwalker who in the end wins the mastery over himself.

The people of the play are distinguished by a breathtaking candour. Hohenzollern, the Prince's friend; the Electress; the amazing Princess of Orange, ordering her regiment to liberate the Prince; the Officers who defy the Elector. These people—their every action and utterance witness to it—move in an ambience of freedom which, though we take it for granted in the play, never existed in any actual state.

This State is a vision of Kleist's. The Great Elector, who incorporates it, is an idealised figure, a ruler with a distaste for power, who mocks those of his officers who see Homburg's disobedience as justified in his victory. His tragic conception of justice cannot admit this. Homburg, too, the disobedient victor, submits to the "absurd" judgment—a judgment not based on the cruel calculus of power—out of respect for the philosophy which underlies it. Here, in the "absurdity" of these decisions, the Elector and the Prince reject heroism and its

treacherous glamour. The play might seem to glorify legitimate power. But the legitimacy here is not that which brought such suffering to our continent and plunged Germany into the abyss. It is a legitimacy never yet realised, but one which might still civilise the State, realise true justice, make candour the rule and not the exception. It is a legitimacy which would do away with much of what Kleist learned to know, and the knowledge of which destroyed him: "Can the State care for truth? A State cares only for that which may be expressed in percentages. It desires to *apply* truth."

The same man, let us remember, wrote: "The profession of arms became so hateful to me that to have any further part in it was unbearable to me." Kleist went further; he declared that it was impossible to be at the same time an officer and a human being. I fear this writer will never be popular in Germany.

FOOLHARDY ENOUGH to tackle the Kleist, I did not know where I would get the courage to cut, or substantially modify, the play's text. We have lost that insouciance with which earlier ages adapted, refurbished, and abridged great literature—*Othello*, say, or *Falstaff*. It took some time for me to overcome my scruples, to understand that I should not allow my respect for a great work to paralyse me. I did what was necessary, attempted only minor surgery and tried to give the composer a text as intact as possible—not a "set" text, but something to which the composer might give a second life in his music. I followed no rule. But, analysing and dissecting individual scenes, I gained an intimate knowledge of the play's structure—an X-ray of it, so to speak—and saw where and how the text could be tautened, cut, speeded up. The magnificent soliloquies, the most terse and economical in dramatic literature, I was able to preserve. Indispensable, on the other hand, were some minor changes: supporting characters, mere cue-deliverers, had sometimes to be amalgamated into one person; passages had sometimes to be re-assigned, and given to "The Officers" or "The Ladies." Suitable occasions for arias, ensembles, and recitative turned up obligingly—only rarely did they have to be sought out. I introduced only one new scene; that in which the Prince, on his way to the

palace to beg the Electress' mercy, meets with the gravediggers at work on his grave. In the original he relates to the Electress what he has seen. In the opera we see it ourselves. I took the text from the ensuing scene with the Electress:

*Ach! Auf dem Wege, der mich zu dir führte,
Sah ich das Grab beim Schein der Fackeln
öffnen...*

*Alas! Upon the way which led me hither
I chanced by torchlight on my open grave...*

If anyone were to claim that this libretto were something on its own, I would feel unable to justify the enterprise. Its only real justification is the music. In the new work, the opera, the composer has given the "adapted" text a new life, a new completeness. I shall consider my work successful if it is little noticed and soon forgotten.

Let me add a word about the conclusion, which proved the most difficult problem of all. I was plagued with a two-fold inhibition: an inhibition about the text itself, and an inhibition about changing it. I tried to combine various passages into a finale, in order to avoid the notorious concluding lines:

*Ins Feld! Ins Feld! Zur Schlacht!
Zum Sieg! Zum Sieg!
In Staub mit allen Feinden Brandenburgs!*

*Forward! Forward! To battle!
To victory, to victory!
Tread in the dust the foes of Brandenburg!*

These lines, above all, had been responsible for the misinterpretations of the play, for the view that Kleist was a poet of nationalism. In the end I used the original version, though I am still not sure that this was the right solution. I used it in the belief that the deeper implications cannot escape those who feel in Kleist's play the workings of the "Genius of Poetry." The essence of the play is not the naïve, operatic apotheosis—to be understood in the context of a different age—but Natalie's despondent cry:

*Ach, was ist Menschengrösse, Menschenruhm!
Ah, what is all man's greatness, all his glory!*

Ingeborg Bachmann

BOOKS & WRITERS

Variations on a Tin Drum

By John Mander

"BUT DO THEY still have a *kultur*?" I was asked the other day by a friend, impressively with-it where the Latins are concerned. Do the Germans still make music, write books, paint pictures a foreigner should know about, as he may be supposed to know about *L'Avventura*, *Altona*, *Franny and Zooey*? It was a question expecting the answer no. And it contained a minor, if unspoken clause—after what happened, after Hitler, can Germans still lay claim to a *kultur*? Did Hitler do for German *kultur*—making the very word abhorrent—as he did for Germany's scientific reputation, her eastern territories, her great-power status?

Not a few foreign critics have thought so. Two years ago, Mr. George Steiner, in a piece in *The Reporter* that enjoyed a certain notoriety, rather cogently argued this case. The corruption of the German language since Goethe, Heine, and Nietzsche had led to the corruption of the German mind (a process brilliantly described in the early pages of Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*). When the virus struck, the anti-bodies failed to muster. A corrupted, rootless, de-personalised, rhetorical language became the perfect medium for mass-hysteria, mass-hatred, and incitement to mass-murder. And after? Mr. Steiner concluded:

A language being used to run hell, gets the habit of hell into its syntax... Most of what is published as serious literature is flat and shoddy. It has no flame of life... At the centre of the miracle of Germany's material resurrection there is a profound deadness of spirit... an inescapable sense of triviality and dissimulation.

With much of Mr. Steiner's thesis one could not disagree. The corruption of Germany's intellectual tradition *had* something to do with the rise of Hitler. Similar forces were at work in other cultures—but elsewhere the tissues were healthier, had greater reserves, were more apt to resist. It is also true, and argues for Mr. Steiner's thesis, that while books continued to be written, and even published, Nazi Ger-

many produced no literature. Goebbels could have done with a Nazi-German *kultur*, but the language went dead on him. German literature continued, splendidly, but it came now from the émigrés: the brothers Mann, Musil, Seghers, Werfel, Brecht, Stefan and Arnold Zweig, Broch, Zuckmayer and Benjamin. The one writer of consequence to remain, Gottfried Benn, came off rather lightly in Mr. Steiner's polemic—too lightly, perhaps, for the dialect of the tribe was no less corrupted in some of Benn's writings, and even the émigrés bear traces of the corruption.

AND IF THE FIRST PART of the thesis is correct—that the German language suffered at the hands of the German will-to-power—the second part seemed, until recently, extremely plausible. Those concealed drawers, lined with exciting and forbidden manuscripts, were opened in 1945 and found to be empty. A few good, if minor novelists—Böll, Koeppen, Andersch—began to publish, were widely read, even translated. But it was clear by the middle 'fifties, the economic miracle having got into its stride, that the Great German Novel of anti-fascism, so confidently predicted, was not going to be written. There were good younger poets, good new work from the émigrés—Brecht, Mann, Zuckmayer—and good plays from two younger dramatists, both Swiss: Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Otherwise, West Germany did appear, in Mr. Steiner's phrase, to exude "an inescapable sense of triviality and dissimulation." And in East Germany, to which several of the more distinguished émigrés had returned, writers had ceased to write.

All this would seem to confirm Mr. Steiner's polemic. But real as the linguistic problem was for young Germans, Mr. Steiner's thesis was presented too exclusively in linguistic terms. After all, a German writer is a poet, playwright, or novelist who writes in German. Kafka is no less a German writer than Hofmannsthal, Rilke,

or Musil; yet none of these writers was a German. And a striking feature of German literature after 1945 was that it was written by men and women who were not in the strict sense "Germans." I have mentioned Frisch and Dürrenmatt; but there were also the Austrians, Ingeborg Bachmann and Ilse Aichinger; and the work of the Jewish "emigration": Paul Celan in Paris, Nelly Sachs in Stockholm, Erich Fried in London.

There is, I suggest, a fairly simple explanation. These writers shared with the Germans the burden of terror and destruction; they did not share the burden of guilt. Victims themselves, they could identify with Europeans suffering under a common jackboot; and out of that experience literature could be made. In contrast, the position of the young German, caught up in *Wehrmacht* or *Hitlerjugend*, was disastrously ambiguous: he was both victim and oppressor. Nor is it relevant whether he had in fact been a Nazi (though the likelihood of an intellectual of the war generation having been a Nazi was extremely small). The German post-1945 generation, though stunned by the same horror, did not dispose of an Archimedean point such as enabled, say, the writers of the French Resistance to make sense of their experience. All were accomplices after the act. It was spiritual disorientation rather than political, material, or even linguistic disruption—though these played their part—which led to that "deadness of spirit" Mr. Steiner and others found in the resurgent Germany of the 'fifties.

I SAY "in the 1950s": for by the time Mr. Steiner's article came to be written—February, 1960—the description already fitted less well. In the autumn of 1959 two books were published in West Germany which transformed this literary situation overnight: Günter Grass' *Die Blechtrommel* (*The Tin Drum*) and Uwe Johnson's *Mutmassungen über Jakob* (*Surmises about Jacob*). Grass' novel came out in this country recently; Johnson's is promised early next year. The high claims staked for these novels in Germany, and now in France, where *The Tin Drum* is a best-seller, together with this year's award to Johnson of the *Prix Formentor*, are likely to build up a certain resistance over here. Are we to be sold yet another international literary pup, a German *nouvelle vague* or Beat Generation? Readers will soon be able to judge. I feel myself, after re-reading both, that Grass' and Johnson's achievement is not really in doubt. They re-establish a German literary presence where before—apart from the émigrés and the "non-German Germans"—there had been only Benn-and-Brecht-imitation, late

Rilking and Surrealising, Hemingway-and-Joyce patische, squeaks and gibberish. The trouble with the Beats, with the *nouveau roman*, on inspection, is that there is so little there. The charge against Johnson and Grass is rather that there is too much there. There is an abundance, an extravagance, an ingenuity, and—pace Mr. Steiner—a linguistic fertility which is truly astonishing. Critically, the complaint is likely to be that neither yet knows how to tame his fine excess. The strength is there and indisputable.

How far do Grass and Johnson represent a Movement? They represent, certainly, a generation. Grass himself is 35; Johnson is 28. That gifted poet and critic, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, their most articulate champion and promoter, is 33; Martin Walser, an interesting novelist of more realistic temper, is 35. Other writers associated with these four—Klaus Roehler, Siegfried Lenz—are of the same age-group. And the age-group is significant. For these writers are too young to have taken part, however involuntarily, in the Nazi rape of Europe. Like the Austrians, the Swiss, and the émigrés, they are able to deny complicity. Only now is the literature people looked to Germany for after 1945—the German account of the German catastrophe—beginning to be written. It is significant that it is only during the past three or four years—stimulated, among other things, by the *Diary of Anne Frank* and the Eichmann trial—that the confrontation with the Nazi past has begun in earnest. This exorcism of the past often follows, for those under the critical age of 35, the familiar and facile pattern of a struggle between the generations. Young Germans do not see why they should be visited with the sins of their fathers; but they are quite prepared to do a little visiting themselves. Severe moralists will see here a further escapism—the world still awaits a good book by a bad German. The fact remains that it is the *uninhibitedness* of Grass' novel—about war, about sex, about politics—that is its most striking and least expected quality. One cannot imagine the book being written ten or fifteen years ago. That it can be written now suggests that it was the spiritual legacy of Nazism that silenced German writers rather than Mr. Steiner's nemesis of language.

GRASS HIMSELF is something of a prodigy. He is painter, playwright, stage-designer, poet. In the public mind, something of the Rabelaisian character of Grass' three-year-old, tin-drumming infant prodigy, Oskar Matzerath, has rubbed off on his creator. He drubs the bourgeois with the gusto of the young Brecht—he recently exhibited a series of paintings of nuns, for whom

Why Some People Don't Buy Harper's, America's Leading National Monthly

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he confesses a long-standing weakness. Like his contemporaries, he tends to be politically *engagé*. Last year, he earned the East Germans' fury by pointing out at a Communist writers' conference that Kafka had not been published in East Berlin. A few weeks later he was appealing, with other young writers living in Berlin, to Anna Seghers to protest against the Wall.

West Berlin has become a main focus of activity for writers of his generation. For Uwe Johnson—tall, grave, bespectacled, Swedish-blond—it is a necessary intellectual habitat, the place where—at least until the Wall—East and West could meet and perform, as Johnson performs it in his novels, their intricate dialectical dance. Politically, the Grass generation refuse any easy label. Up to the Wall, they were accused of a certain indulgence towards East Germany—unfairly, for it was the people of East Germany who had their sympathy, not Herr Ulbricht. Up to the Wall, again, their anger was directed rather against Bonn, which they could hope to influence, than against Pankow, which they could not. They protested against nuclear weapons for the *Bundeswehr*, against pensions for Nazi high-ups, against Schröder, Strauss, Brentano, and the Bonn "Restoration." In doing so, they had most of the younger generation, and almost all of the intellectuals, behind them. If there are younger right-wing intellectuals in Germany one has yet to hear of them.

Not that Grass and Johnson, Enzensberger and Walser are professional protestants. *Engagé* they may be in their private—albeit, highly publicised—political opinions, but they stone-wall if you go for a commitment in their novels. They are liable to fall back on the I-am-a-Camera patter of the *nouveaux romanciers*. Johnson's *Surmises about Jacob*, according to Johnson, is merely a record, a meticulously neutral account of the career of a young East German railwayman, who absconds to West Berlin to rejoin his girl-friend; thinks better of it; and, back home—it is the time of Hungary—gets run over by a train (did he fall? was he pushed? Johnson leaves us to surmise). Here, Johnson has a subject as ambiguous and intractable as Grass'. Grass grapples with half a century of German history; Johnson tackles the great taboo of West German life, the division of Germany and its human consequences. And Johnson writes of Communism, as Grass of Nazism, from the inside. Their ambitions are as remarkable as their talents.

JOHNSON, YOUNGER THAN Grass, a Marxist-trained alumnus of Leipzig university, has written in *Surmises about Jacob* and his second novel, *The Third Book about Achim*, the most

interesting work to come out of East Germany (and perhaps Eastern Europe) since the Iron Curtain fell. Johnson now lives in the West, and is no admirer of Ulbricht; yet *Surmises about Jacob* is not, in the familiar sense, an anti-communist work. Indeed it is a deeply Marxist novel, the book of a young man who rejects Ulbricht's Germany on Marxist grounds. This attitude, of course, is not rare among East European intellectuals of the school of Harich and Kolakovsky, Lukacs and Ernst Bloch. But Johnson is the first to have made literature out of this Revisionism—a Revisionism which looks back to the early Marx, demanding a Marxism *existentialisant*.

Johnson's book moves, dialectically, between two poles: the smooth ideological blandishments of Herr Rohlfs, a kind of Hegelian Gletkin, and railwayman Jacob's contingent existence. Jacob's contingency finally eludes Herr Rohlfs' all-encompassing essentialist rationality—the ratio, in Johnson's view, of a degenerate Marxism. Forbidding as this must sound, the novel is highly successful in evoking the day-to-day realities of life under Communism: the harsh pressure—and the irrelevance to actual living—of a total political ideology. The language is ingenious and subtle, combining sophisticated dialectics with an earthiness native to writers from the German North-east—like the Expressionist Ernst Barlach or Günter Grass himself. The novel suffers, like Grass', from those traditional German failings, prolixity and excessive complexity. Nor is it clear whether our ignorance of Jacob's inner life—which we know only from the "surmises" of his friends—is due to the conditions of life under Communism, or is fundamental to the *condition humaine*. If the latter—and the ambiguity is not resolved—Johnson's critique would seem to apply equally to other human societies, rendering much of the East German background otiose.

BE THAT AS IT may, Johnson's and Grass' spirited toppling of the West German idols remains admirable and astonishing. Paradoxically, Germany now has a "literary left" rather more militant and self-confident, for all the tameness of official opposition politics, than that of most Western countries. That these "left" attitudes are those of a whole generation is brought out strongly in two recent paperback anthologies: *Ich lebe in der Bundesrepublik* and *Die Alternative*. The level of political argument may not be sophisticated—it smacks more of *Declaration* than of *Conviction*. But it is remarkably unanimous: it is a generation anti-Communist, anti-Nazi, anti-clerical, anti-capitalist, but only very mildly pro-SPD. It is a generation, not surprisingly, of pragmatical

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P U T N A M

Anarchists. In *Die Alternative*, timed for last year's general election, most of the contributors regard an SPD government as a lesser evil, but would seem to prefer no government at all. For the generation that inherited Nazism and its aftermath, I repeat, this is hardly surprising. Certainly, it is close to the view of history—cynical, droll, unattached—given us by Günter Grass' rumbustious three-year-old *Simplicissimus*.

Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* was the great baroque-picaresque German epic of the Thirty Years' War. Grass' epic of modern Germany stands in the long tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, which has its roots in *Simplicissimus*. *Simplicissimus*, of course, is a moral book; Grass' has been deplored for its amorality, its apparent nihilism. But *The Tin Drum* is not really a nihilistic work. Like the early books of Messrs. Wain and Amis, it is an exercise in the satirical-picaresque; and satire requires a base as well as a target. In Grass, the target is the German petty bourgeoisie, the breeding-ground of Nazism; the base a kind of humanistic anarchism. In his second book, *Katz und Maus* (*Cat and Mouse*)—a novella about heroism in war—the satire is sharper, more specific; the writing, too, has grown tauter. Grass' own attitudes—to the war, to

authority, to schoolteacher-patriots—are not in doubt. There is a congruence between the social attitudes here—and in the satirical writings of Enzensberger, Walser, and Roehler—and those in *Die Alternative*.

IT IS NOT PERHAPS too firm a base for a "left" literary movement, but it is certainly a traditional one. When was the German Left not "homeless"—*eine heimatlose Linke*? If Grass' work falls in with the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, Enzensberger's is no less in the tradition of Heine, Tucholsky, and Karl Kraus. Like Heine—though the strength of Enzensberger's poetic talent remains, I feel, to be tested—Enzensberger is both poet and social critic. And, as with Karl Kraus, Enzensberger's critique of language is bound up with his critique of society. Two essays in his recently published collection, *Einzelheiten* (*Samples*), are devoted to assaults on *Der Spiegel*, and on the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Germany's leading newspaper. That he has drawn blood is nicely documented by the ponderous half-page article in which the *Frankfurter*, ridiculously enough, recently attempted to swat this high-spirited gadfly.

Enzensberger's attack on *Der Spiegel*, first published in 1956, is a small classic of literary sociology. *Der Spiegel* is surely the most astonishing journalistic phenomenon in post-war Central Europe. With a sale of half-a-million, in a language-area where almost no successful journals of opposition survive, *Der Spiegel* is a power. It has been compared variously with *Time* magazine, *Confidential*, and the *New Statesman*. But it has no real equivalent in the extra-German world. Technically, it is modelled on *Time*; its content is closer to the reckless, irresponsible anti-politics of *Die Weltbühne* in the Weimar Republic. Enzensberger's point, of course, is that each country gets the press it deserves, and that the Federal Republic has deserved *Der Spiegel*. *Der Spiegel* provides surrogate opposition; it is violently aggressive, but wholly unconstructive. It is stimulating, wicked, brilliant, read by all; yet it can hardly be taken seriously. It is this lack of any base, of any perspective, to which Enzensberger points—and which he lays at the door of West German society. He makes no less plain his rejection of the Communist alternative; though, like Johnson, he clearly owes much—as also in the "political" poetry he has written—to Brecht's critique of bourgeois society. But what must strike the outsider is that Enzensberger's strictures on *Der Spiegel* are applicable in some measure to his writings and those of his generation. The comparison is in-

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CONSTABLE

vidious: but if the Federal Republic has deserved *Der Spiegel*, presumably it has also deserved Grass' *The Tin Drum*.

Yet one cannot help thinking that a society which has produced *The Tin Drum*, Johnson's two novels, and indeed Enzensberger himself, is not quite as "spiritually dead" as its critics insist. Of course, the Movement—if it is a movement—is still very young. The writers associated with it have almost certainly become too fashionable too soon. The fact that both Herr Johnson's and Herr Grass' second books show an interesting advance disposes, on the other hand, of earlier rumours that they are one-book authors. But the most striking thing about this body of writers—and the thing most destructive of Mr. Steiner's thesis—is really its *German-ness*. Like the Japanese, the Germans have the reputation of being an imitative race. Young Germans, after 1945, pounced on the "new" authors—Proust, Eliot, Hemingway—the Nazis had kept from them; a period of imitative writing and criticism ensued. This phenomenon, and the general lack of self-confidence, led many to detect an "inescapable sense of triviality and dissimulation" in the Federal Republic. The general truth of the charge may be admitted—Grass, Johnson, and Enzensberger would be the first to admit it—but there seem to be potent counter-forces at work. It would be foolish to make too much of the first-fruits of this new generation. But further examination might lead to the withdrawal of Mr. Steiner's so definitive death-certificate.

Distorting James

The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James.

By DOROTHEA KROOK. Cambridge, 45s.

THIS BOOK is rather slow to announce its theme and far too much space is taken up with extensive re-telling of stories and re-description of characters which—it is not flippant to point out—James managed tolerably well himself. The theme really emerges when Dr. Krook affirms that in *The Golden Bowl* we will find "the whole fable directed to the single end of exhibiting the triumphant supersession of the æsthetic by the moral." Single end, note—the dogmatic confidence is characteristic. Dr. Krook (as we gathered from her first book) is interested in recruiting writers for her tradition of "religious humanism," and to this end she is willing to narrow James's focus and reduce his subtle complexities to a single tendentious aim: she undertakes to demonstrate that James's basic intention was to preach "the

redemptive power of human love." Now her book does contain many insights and shrewd observations but because Dr. Krook is so pre-occupied with "damnation," "redemption," and "love," she partially misreads many of James's major novels and—as I see it—dangerously distorts *The Golden Bowl* in a way which needs strongly challenging.

But to start with the best first. *The Turn of the Screw* provides Dr. Krook with her best case and she gives the most plausible "Faustian" interpretation of the story I know. The Governess is "the good angel" who saves Flora by "love" but who is guilty of "spiritual pride" in her handling of Miles. She hungers for total knowledge and this is evil and damnable (since only God can enjoy perfect knowledge), and it drives Miles to his death. Even so I prefer R. P. Blackmur's non-theological handling of the tale. "Either James's tale is frivolous and the ghosts are 'real,' or they are actual, the governess's other selves, actual hallucinations by which the moral depravity of the unnaturally 'good' parson's daughter is exacerbated and enacted, to the mutilation of one life and the demolition of another." More curiously—and surely more wrongly—Dr. Krook suggests that Isabel Archer and Milly Theale are also "damned" for their spiritual pride: the first because she concealed her "mind," the second because she concealed her illness. When she comes to *The Awkward Age* Dr. Krook establishes quite clearly the falsity and sterility lurking behind all the wit and civility of society but in asserting that this has corrupted Nanda she is surely wrong. And here we can see a curious sort of literalism in Dr. Krook's work. She maintains that one of the main themes of the book is, literally, a discussion of how young girls should "come out" into society and that James finally gave his vote to the English method but nevertheless showed that Nanda had been rendered unmarriageable because of her tragic knowledge. But surely the book is a study in two sorts of innocence (not two national theories of education): Aggie, guarded from knowledge is all instinctive corruption under the pure unblemished skin; Nanda, visibly marked by her weight of knowledge, is radically innocent. Her renunciation of life does not testify to her "demoralisation" as Dr. Krook insists—rather, James is here developing one of his major themes, namely that true knowledge of life is acquired at the expense of participation in life, that the cost of vision is exclusion and renunciation. (Nanda is rescued by Henry James who enters the book as Mr. Longdon and takes her off to a thinly disguised Lamb House. She is too fine, not too flawed, to live in a society which, James came increasingly to feel, was

mainly "an awful game of grab.") This renunciation theme is more profoundly explored in *The Sacred Fount* about which Dr. Krook has many excellent points to make. I agree that the epistemological theme is of major importance here, that it is a parable of the artistic imagination at work. But she is led astray when she brings up the redemption theme and says that the narrator "fails to save" the characters he speculates about, because he is "lacking in love." The artist is always helpless to "save" society—he can only chart its floundering, reveal its cruelties, lament its wastes. By a curious process the artist provides destinies, values, and meanings where life itself exhibits merely a mess of hostile and conflicting appetites. To miss this and go on about love and redemption is simply to lay down the book and take up a prejudice. Dr. Krook is the victim of her preferred vocabulary.

Moving on to the late works, Dr. Krook sees *The Wings of the Dove* as a "clash between the powers of light and darkness" with Milly as the bringer of a superior conception of goodness which makes the wisdom of the world foolish. Dr. Krook mentions "redemption" in the last sentence of the chapter but does not suggest how it has been achieved. Even this simplifies the book. It points to "its image of moral beauty" as Blackmur put it, but it misses what Blackmur also saw—"its actual waste of moral devastation."

All these readings are preparations for Dr. Krook's interpretation of *The Golden Bowl* which is "a great fable of the redemption of man by the transforming power of human love." Now obviously some vast parable is stirring in the depths of this book—perhaps, as Quentin Anderson has brilliantly argued, we are to see it as showing American money, good faith, and innocence coming to terms with European evil and history to create a new cultural order, or perhaps it shows "principles" uniting with "manners" as F. Crews has suggested. The aura of suggestion hovering around the book is so rich and so resonant that it permits of a multiplicity of interpretations none of which can totally account for it. Dr. Krook sees the book through "the Judæo-Christian scheme of redemption." Maggie, "the Loving God," redeems the Prince by love; Adam, the old "Just God," punishes Charlotte who is too proud to humble herself for redemption by love. The Prince can be redeemed because he repudiates "the touchstone of taste" and recognises "the surpassing dignity, power, and beauty of the moral by which it transcends the inferior dignity, power, and beauty of the merely æsthetic." Charlotte, however, will have a chance to use her pride and "greatness" in

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America—her punishment is for her own good. Finally, “they all emerge more wonderful and prodigious at the end than they were at the beginning.” Thus the forces of good have succeeded in restoring “the harmony and stability of the universal moral order.” This reading of the book seems to me unforgivably to simplify—and thus to falsify—the complexity of James’s work. Dr. Krook admits that perhaps some of the motives of Adam and Maggie are equivocal—but the concession is minor and grudging, as is her recognition of a “strain of pessimism” in James’s late work. She insists that if Maggie’s love is partially selfish it is mainly selfless and aims at redemption, that if Adam’s motives are partly acquisitive, they are mainly concerned with absorbing the æsthetic world without disturbing the moral one. Everything, that is, works to and for a good end. It is this assertion of ultimate harmony which must be contested—because it smoothes over all the dissonances and irreconcilabilities, all the ruin and desolation in James’s late vision; it suppresses everything which James meant by his famous phrase “the Medusa face of life”; it makes a simple optimist out of a complex undidactic artist. Dr. Krook violates James’s fine mind with her own crude ideas. Thus in her admiration for Maggie’s “love” she ignores the important element of “revenge” which lies near the roots of it (a theme adumbrated in the fine and relevant story *Madame de Mauves*—which Dr. Krook does not mention), she plays down Maggie’s relish of the sense of power and dominion, she wilfully misses all that is inhuman in the heady sense of mastery and control which Americans enjoy (a joy more chilling, perhaps, in its very innocence). Dr. Krook takes a tangled nest of motives and reiterates “redemptive love” until the complexities melt out of sight. Revealingly she mentions the late great story *The Bench of Desolation* saying that here too we have a man (Herbert Dodd) redeemed by the love of a woman (Kate Cookham)—but she neglects to refer to Dodd’s experience of “this queer torment of irreconcilable things, a bewildered consciousness of tenderness and patience and cruelty.” And cruelty.... Dr. Krook cannot endure the “torment of irreconcilable things” and so she distorts James’s voice until it preaches a world harmonised by perfect love. But this torment is the very torment of life itself—and James knew it.

What Dr. Krook believes is her own business, but this attempt to turn James into a prophet and disciple of her own brand of sentimental chiasm must be vigorously resisted. For Henry James is not a “religious humanist”—whatever Dr. Krook may mean by that unctuous phrase—

he is what Conrad said he was: “the preserver, the keeper, the expounder of human experience ... the historian of fine consciences.” It is worth remembering the fine words James gave to the dying writer Dencombe in *The Middle Years*: “We work in the dark—we do what we can—we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art—not the optimism of faith.”

Tony Tanner

Isherwood’s Hell

Down There On a Visit. By CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD. Methuen, 21s.

MR. ISHERWOOD is an experimental writer who has invented a form of his own. Like most experimental writers, he is sometimes estimated unjustly, and interpreted anxiously and angrily, because the critic, or reader, is not always sure how he ought to be read and what his intentions are. He shocks, because he is truthful in an unfamiliar way. Also he evidently uses fiction for an oblique moral purpose. But he is a subtle moralist; there are no reassuring hammer-blows, as in Orwell, which tell the reader quite unmistakably which side he ought to be on, leaving him complacent among the angels. There is doubt, insinuation of opposing points of view, and therefore discomfort. It is as if the author, through the narrator, is still making up his mind what he believes, or where he stands, as he writes: at least he successfully creates the illusion of a tentative development within the stories that he tells.

Mr. Isherwood’s novels—and this latest one is no exception—constitute a peculiar kind of contemporary history. Their peculiarity is the combination of an intensely private private life recounted against the background of public events: first, Fascism, and now the war that emerged from it. From Mr. Norris onwards he has sustained the story of a hero who is obstinately loyal to the values of private life and of personal relations, as they have been represented by Mr. Forster: of friendship and truthfulness. These values, the way of life that they require, have been constantly threatened by the noise and rumour of political barbarians without the gates, gates which enclose a very small area marked “private: no politicians no public poses.” The hero’s defensive tactics—and the substance of his heroism—have been evasion; he keeps on the move; for he is perpetually on a visit, and has never stayed long enough to compromise, and to settle down with the enemy. He recounts four of his visits here; for the hero is always a writer



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before he is anything else. He tells the story of his visits with a wonderful economy and vividness.

The centre of Mr. Isherwood's experiment is the use of his hero, Christopher. The sequence of the novels constitutes a very peculiar kind of *Bildungsroman*, in which a hero of our times undergoes formative experiences. The peculiarity is that he is not too profoundly changed by his experiences: he protects himself by observing, and keeping a record of his observations. The purpose of the record is to establish his own identity. Novels need not be, although they often have been, inquiries into freedom and necessity, in one or several of its many forms—either as the opposition of the individual and society, or of character and destiny. There is another kind of novel which is an inquiry into the protagonist's identity, and which starts from the question "Who (or what kind of person) am I?" For a novel of this kind, the ambiguously autobiographical form is a natural one: as in *Vie de Henry Brulard* or *Adolphe*. Literary egoism of this kind is the expression of a fluid personality, of an uncentred "I." The memoirs of an egoist help to provide him with a centre. The fluid ego flows into a succession of situations, modifies each of them a little, and is temporarily shaped by them; but each time it resumes its way along other channels. Any shape that can

be discerned is discernible only in the succession of incidents; these are the situations in which, to his surprise, and, as it seems, through no purposes of his own, the unidentified hero successively found himself. So the literary egoist, using the ambiguous first person singular, can represent the hero also as a tracer element, which will mark the diseased organs of the social body as it passes. Mr. Isherwood has used the device subtly for many years. He contrives to suggest some doubt about what kind of truthfulness to expect: the truthfulness of fact or that of imaginative reconstruction. The reader's uncertainty is more sharply provoked in this novel than in the Berlin stories. For these are stories of distorted private lives, and the distortion is intrinsic to them and cannot be so closely associated with known historical events.

All four of the episodes seemed to me like visits to hell; but they are lightly and humorously described by the narrator, who, exercising his professional powers as observer, evidently enjoyed himself. And it is typical of him that he should. His reflections on war and peace are ghastly in their banality and smugness, and his reflections on love only slightly less so. But the exact recording of voices and manners and moods makes up for everything else and silences disapproval. A character who is represented as respecting individuals, and their differences, so faithfully as this is still an acceptable hero, in spite of heartless political opinions and of a lop-sided estimate of his friends, Paul—of the last episode—would have been a rather absurd figure of fantasy and film if he had been commemorated in fiction by Hemingway or Fitzgerald: here he is solid and credible, gaining, like Mr. Norris, from being a sexual monster reduced to lifelike proportions by the narrator's calm prose. The Californian wise man and counsellor, whom the narrator admires and follows, is equally credible; but, unlike Paul, he belongs to the ghastly side of the narrator's experiences, who cheerfully endures him with the wonderful patience of the born writer unconsciously seeking material.

The reader who, hot for moral certainties in the contemporary manner, tries to disentangle Mr. Isherwood's attitudes and opinions from the narrator's will fail, and will spoil his own pleasure in the attempt. He will have to invent Mr. Isherwood for himself, and he will do it badly; the narrator Mr. Isherwood has invented for him, and he has done it perfectly. He is the hard centre of a succession of stories, which, taken together, constitute a light masterpiece. This is a brilliant addition to the series: a work of elaborate art that gives instant and continuing pleasure.

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Shorter Notices

Macmillan—Portrait of a Politician. By EMRYS HUGHES. *Allen & Unwin.*

WHAT DISAPPOINTS in this, the first long biography of the Member for Bromley, is the lack of any serious attempt to delve into the motives and motivation of Harold Macmillan. Instead Mr. Emrys Hughes, on other occasions a telling critic, is content to weave a simple little tale around the simple little idea that power corrupts.

The pre-war Macmillan of the Middle Way, rebel in the Conservative ranks, for a time even Whipless, meets with Mr. Hughes' approval. But after the war this earnest Jekyll was apparently put down quickly by the polemical party politician, weaving and ducking his way through the fifties to side-step after Suez into highest office as the Champion of the Tory right-wing—and its prisoner. Inevitably moneyed interests run amok, into an inevitable pay-off. It starts with the financial crisis of mid-1961, and we leave Macmillan in March of 1962 crestfallen at the "beginning of the end."

Half a year on, it seems a pity that Mr. Hughes, in his eagerness to jump the gun, did not stay to fatten out his portrait of the Prime Minister. The July Cabinet changes, added to the record over Cyprus, Africa and the Common Market, suggest the persistence, despite the constrictions of office, of a certain taste and aptitude for policies that are imaginative, ruthless, even radical. Mr. Hughes does in fact give his devil his due for the Wind of Change speech, which he quotes at length, but his main concern is not to chart development but to prove *volte-face*. So for the most part he follows the satirists and cartoonists into one-dimensional ways, giving us the old conjuror, the artful dodger, kept in power by PR plotters pumping slogans into every Coronation street in the land.

Selected Essays 1934–1943. By SIMONE WEIL. Chosen & translated by Richard Rees. *Oxford*, 30s.

SIMONE WEIL and George Orwell both fought in Spain in the same party, they were both socialist intellectuals with wide interests and a lively intelligence: natural essayists. [Yet their essays could hardly be more different, and although they may once have seemed wild and original, they seem now each to have embodied qualities not uncharacteristic of their backgrounds.] For my money I should prefer Orwell, a much more powerful, unromantic and full-bodied writer, but Simone Weil also has her qualities, lucidity, a sharp historical realism, and touches of a dry, abstract brilliance.

The texture of her prose is usually thin, clear and even, occasionally, reading in English, like Bacon, but more often like Taine. This translation is generally excellent, but there are a few bad passages, and these mostly correspond to snagged places in the run of thought, or to a curious sort of gear-change into second-rate of which these essays are capable: phrases like "that place in the heart from which the inflection of evil evokes a cry of surprise," and sentences like "thus it is that the social drama, which corresponds to the latter

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situation, is falsely assimilated, by the use of the word 'rights,' to the former one."

For all her lucidity and philosophy, Simone Weil had one or two romantic preoccupations of an almost mystical intensity. It seemed to her a part of philosophy to dislike Aristotle, and a part of social conscience to abominate everything about the Roman empire. Her symbolic enthusiasms were for Plato, for the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and for Languedoc in the twelfth century. Her political judgments, particularly her judgments of what were and were not real political factors, were painfully clear-headed. Both the skill and the courage of her political analysis seem to have been learnt from Machiavelli.

Her personal philosophy is hard to analyse, and some of its elements were not worked out. [She had the same fascination as other war-time writers with the problems of Antigone and in her treatment of human personality she has affinities with the excellent but I suppose almost forgotten war-time poet Capetanakis.] Her social philosophy, built up in the face of Marxism with genuine philosophic intelligence, is far more moving and convincing than the humanist intuitions of her more personal essays, and her essays on political shibboleths, on the poet Theophile de Via, and on Leon Blum's government of 1936 have the same sense of an organised intelligence writing in a disorganised landscape, which is why we read essays.

Djamila Boupacha. By SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR and GISELE HALIMI. Translated by Peter Green. *Deutsch and Weidenfeld & Nicholson*, 25s.

THIS is the authentic account of the Boupacha affair, the story of how two women—Djamila and her lawyer Gisèle Halimi—fought their way through thickets of menace and obstruction to proclaim the facts of torture in Algeria. Djamila Boupacha, who may or may not have tried to lay a bomb in the "Brasserie des Facultés" in Algiers, was beaten, kicked, and elaborately tortured by electric shock; cigarettes were ground out against her breasts and legs, and she was deflowered with an empty bottle. Gisèle Halimi (the book is hers; in spite of the assertions on the cover, Simone de Beauvoir only wrote the introduction) took her case through the Algerian courts, got her transferred to France and ultimately released, and helped to lay her treatment squarely on the conscience of France. What even Maître Halimi's brilliance and courage could not win Djamila was justice; as most of this book explains, the hunt to bring her torturers to trial ran finally into the wall of the Army's flat refusal to produce them. There the Boupacha affair rests. Arrested by Ben Khedda as a "Benbellist" and released again, Djamila got married the other day and Maître Halimi went to her wedding.

But there is no happy ending to an affair of torture until one is sure it cannot happen again. This is the burden of the "Testimonies" appended to the book by various figures, who put much of the blame on the way the Gaullist régime protects its own. The translation is spattered with oddities and mistakes.

LETTERS

THOSE of us who write prose sometimes have the impression that much of to-day's poetry is simply what our prose would be if the discipline were removed. Without further comment, I cite the second line of Rex Taylor's "Ploughing" in your August issue:

"Bow and stern he breasts the wind."

I am used to being incredulous before such examples, but it always shakes my confidence. Is the emperor really naked (bow and stern)?

In Tennyson's first version of "The Lady of Shalott," the familiar line read: "*And round about her stern she wrote, 'The Lady of Shalott.'*" He was persuaded to transfer the inscription to her bow. He might, of course, have had her breasting the current with her stern.

LOUIS J. HALLE

Valais, Switzerland

"Pressure Politics"

THE ARTICLE ON "Pressure Politics" in the August ENCOUNTER was of lively and immediate interest in Washington where much of the same pattern is gradually coming to light.

A Senate Sub-committee has just revealed what is termed the "unconscionable profits" of a former Secretary of the Treasury from a Government nickel contract. Small uranium producers have complained that the company of one of the most powerful Senators has received unfair advantages in a \$200 million uranium contract with the Government. A member of the Senate Armed Services Committee is referred to good humouredly in the press as "the Senator from Böeing" (Böeing is a large aircraft producer with Government contracts.) A member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during several years in private life represented Guatemala. Some years ago, a ranking member of the Senate Commerce Committee belonged to a law firm which had as a client the Pennsylvania Railroad.

There is a new and sophisticated pattern of influence, at least in the United States, which is entirely legal but of doubtful ethics. General Bull-moose, a cartoon caricature of a big business tycoon, advises a protégé, "I never do anything crooked unless it is legal."

It may well be that in the under-developed countries bribes are still passed in the form of folding money, but in the more sophisticated societies it is public relations contracts, advice on what stocks to buy, and tips on oil investments. Ethics has a hell of a time keeping up with progress.

TRISTRAM COFFIN

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"Was Stalin Necessary?"

IT IS ALWAYS a pleasure to cross swords with my old friend Leopold Labedz, who never fails to be a stimulating opponent. He takes me to task [ENCOUNTER, August] for my judgment of the necessity or otherwise of Stalin. I do not deny the validity of some of his comments, but on occasion he seems to misunderstand what I was trying to say. My article [ENCOUNTER, April] was concerned, first, to discuss the personal role of Stalin, *i.e.*, the extent to which his terror régime was situation-determined; secondly, I was concerned to identify the extent to which the situation itself, including the horrors of forced collectivisation, flowed from the existence of a Communist dictatorship which was trying to industrialise a predominantly peasant country quickly. I do not pretend that these are the only questions which should be asked in a survey of the political and economic history of the Soviet Union. Nor indeed are they the kind of questions which permit of a definitive answer. They are, nonetheless, matters which are interesting to discuss.

I do not quite understand the point of Labedz's criticism of my discussion of necessity. He both accepts and rejects the proposition that the choices of politicians are limited by their own ideological attitudes and beliefs. Surely, if one is trying to identify the role of an individual, it is significant to identify the ideological limitations on his choice which would apply not only to him but also to the overwhelming majority of his party comrades. For example, no leader of the British Labour Party is in a position to de-nationalise an existing nationalised industry, and this is surely an elementary political fact. A Conservative is less limited in this respect, though no doubt he would be precluded by his beliefs from advocating certain solutions which would be acceptable to the Labour Party. All this is obvious, and I do not see why the same kind of logic cannot be applied to the choices available to the Bolsheviks. Labedz complains that "if historical necessity is so defined, then each régime carries with it its own inevitability." The word "inevitability" is his, not mine. It does carry with it its own limitations on the range of practicable choices. He points out that, if my logic were valid, the Indian Congress Party must be seen as having a different field of choices from that which was or would be available to the Communists. A minute's reflection would cause him to see that this is not only the case, but self-evidently the case. Why is this a criticism?

Labedz also asserts that I expressed the view that "forcible collectivisation was necessary." In doing so he again shows a misunderstanding of the subject of my article, which was Stalin and not collectivisation as such. I carefully made the point that non-Communists would have found some totally different solution; I also quite specifically left open the question of the possible viability of alternative policies. What I tried to do was to stress the considerations which led to the decision to impose collectivisation, looking for the impersonal logic of events, noting that the bulk of the Communist Party, including former oppositionists, rallied round the Party in its campaign against the

peasants. All this is relevant to the assessment of Stalin's personal role. I also noted that voluntary collectivisation was a non-starter in the circumstances, and that in those same circumstances forced collectivisation would be associated with excesses. The actual methods used, not without a great deal of personal encouragement from Stalin, led to excesses and brutalities on a vast scale. What happened then is not part of any model for underdeveloped countries to follow. It is rather a terrible warning, and I never suggested otherwise.

Labedz roundly asserts that I deny any connection between collectivisation and the great purge. Perhaps he would re-read my article, where I devote much space to establishing the connection between the harshness and brutalities of collectivisation and the increasing intensity of police repression. But the events which followed Kirov's death, and especially the great massacres of 1936-38, were no *necessary* consequence of the events before 1934. Labedz seems to overlook the distinction between a causal connection and a necessary connection, though admittedly the distinction is never absolute, but is rather one of degree. *Of course* the events of 1929-34 were part of the essential background of the purges. But was it a logical consequence of collectivisation for Stalin to massacre the majority of the members of his own faction, the very men who carried collectivisation through? Is there not some evidence for the proposition that this massacre followed an attempt by his colleagues to restrain Stalin's growing arbitrariness and blood-letting? True, the earlier events created an atmosphere in which a mass purge became possible. However, as recent Chinese experience suggests, disastrous "leaps forward" can sometimes be followed by a sinking of differences in an effort to put matters right, rather than by mass shootings.

Labedz would seem to ascribe to me the belief that I accept only economic and social logic, and not a political logic of events. This is surely not the case. The desire of the Communist leadership to maintain itself in power was an essential element in the choices which they made, including the decision to collectivise. The relative importance of this aspect of the decision is a matter on which legitimate disagreement is possible, but I nowhere denied that this was a significant factor. Did the events of 1936-38 follow from political necessity? If they did, and I failed to allow for this, I am guilty of error. However, despite carefully reading Schapiro's book, I still believe that what I called the "whole hog Stalinist terror" was primarily aimed at securing the absolute dictatorship of Joseph Stalin, over the Party and everyone else. (Schapiro's chapter on the purges is entitled: "Stalin's Victory Over the Party"!) I say this while entirely accepting the proposition that political logic led to toughness and to numerous restrictions on human freedom. It is true that the power manoeuvring of Stalin did indeed have its own logic and its own "regularities." However, since my paper was concerned with identifying Stalin's personal role, I naturally treated actions in furtherance of Stalin's career as attributable to Stalin rather than to the impersonal logic of events. I am surprised that Labedz should be so insistent on his

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torical inevitability and the inexorable march of History, etc., etc. On other occasions he and those who think like him seem to take a somewhat different view of the role of personality.

A. NOVE

London School of Economics

At the Wall

IN YOUR August number Walter Z. Laqueur (*Thoughts at the Wall*) writes that "according to Hitler and Rosenberg, there was no Soviet ideology, only a 'Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy to dominate the world'; and he bewails the condition that Russia was not studied by Germans in Marxist terms from 1933 to 1945, ending with the conclusions: 'As far as the impact of ideology on Soviet policy is concerned, most German students of Soviet affairs are as much at sea as the rest of the world, only more so.' The first part of this statement is an oversimplification almost worthy of Rosenberg himself. About the rest it may be remembered that the main events in the history of Russia during the twelve years of the Hitler era, 1933-45, were the Moscow Purges, the Stalin-Hitler Pact, the German attack and the war. I cannot imagine what Mr. Laqueur means by the impact of Marxism on these events.

JOHN LUKACS

Phoenixville, U.S.A.

THE CONCEPT of the "Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy" which, incidentally is partly of Russian origin (*Zhidomasonstvo*), runs through all of Alfred Rosenberg's writings. If Mr. Lukacs doubts this, he has either not read Rosenberg or he means another man—the name is quite frequent in Germany. As for the impact of Marxism-Leninism on Soviet policy I thought I had expressed myself fairly clearly; one of the main problems of Soviet studies was, and is, to establish to what extent Soviet domestic and foreign policy is motivated by Marxist-Leninist doctrine, and how far other factors help to shape it.

WALTER LAQUEUR

London

Bomb Folly

Mr. G. F. HUDSON's article "That Ten Per Cent" [ENCOUNTER, July] tends towards a conclusion which I agree with in general, that nuclear weapons are not much good. But it is also fortunately or unfortunately, according to which way you look at it, mistaken in thinking that the British V Bomber force is even less good than other nuclear weapons. For how long, he asks, could a "state of tiptoe preparedness be maintained?" The answer is at least a month. He asks if we can really be sure the bombers "would be in the air rather than on the ground" if the Russians were to launch a missile strike against them. It takes from 1¼ to 2½ minutes to get them up from "tiptoe preparedness." Again, he asks if an officer on duty "would inter-

Life & Letters Today

London

COLLECTORS of "Gems from the Lord Chamberlain" may be interested to learn that his office has now objected to a phrase in "Hedda Gabler." In reply to a request from the Dundee Repertory Theatre to perform Michael Meyer's translation of this play, an illegible signatory has refused to allow the pious old servant, Bertha, to utter the exclamation: "Jesus!"

Is one seriously to understand that what was permissible in the Christiania of 1890 is forbidden in the United Kingdom in 1962?

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

New York

THERE is a new class of perpetual students in America, spawned by prosperity, who think of education not as a preparation for life but as an escape from the more strenuous life of competitive business and squabbling nations. In another generation we used to deplore about this time of year the athletic bum, who put sports ahead of everything else; now we have the academic bum, who puts books ahead of everything else.

NEW YORK TIMES

Sofia

ALTHOUGH Balkantourist officially welcomes the private traveller as well as organised parties, he is rare and occasions surprise and interest. A man of about 40 at a waterfront café at Nesebur said we were the first English people he had met, and pressed on us some of his catch of fish. Indeed, the fact that we came from "Anglia" or "Britannia" (which made us feel as remarkable as Ancient Britons) was generally greeted with approval. "Ah, Bouchier!" cried a man at a kebab stall in a small town at the foot of the Rila mountains and shook our hands. He was referring to J. D. Bouchier, the distinguished Balkans correspondent of The Times who played a leading part in Bulgarian affairs for 30 years until his death in 1921. On his grave at Rila monastery we found that someone had recently placed a small bunch of wild flowers.

THE TIMES

London

IGOR STRAVINSKY writes: "Whether I am a forefront or rear-guard or road-hog composer is beside the point—which is the disparity between the doer and the explainer. I have not been able to 'keep up' even in my own specialised and ever-narrowing preserves. And since everything one writes is already out of date on publication, the professional literature of the future (which is now) can consist only of summaries and supplements: the developments in the field during the previous week. Dr. Toynbee's last book was called 'Volume Twelve. Reconsiderations.' And Volume Thirteen? Further Reconsiderations? And so on."

THE OBSERVER

London

FOUR naughty songs from Noel Coward's new show "Sail Away" have been banned from the air by the B.B.C. Or, to put it officially, they have been "placed on the restricted list." A B.B.C. spokesman said yesterday the songs were on the restricted list "because they are considered unsuitable on grounds of taste." He added, "We don't use the word 'ban' here, you know."

DAILY MAIL

ON matters cultural, Nikita Khrushchev is simply not with it; modern art gives him indigestion, and he regards jazz as so much noise. Last week he reached all the way back to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, trying to convert The Song of Hiawatha into a Communist ballad for disarmament without inspection of controls. Addressing 2,000 delegates from 100 countries who assembled in Moscow's Palace of Congresses, Khrushchev recalled that Longfellow summoned "the tribes of men" with the plea:

"Bury your war-clubs and your weapons
... Smoke the calumet together.

"I do not smoke," he added, "but really, I would be happy to light the calumet together with the leaders of all powers."

As Khrushchev should have known, even Hiawatha discovered the need for controls over war-clubs. As Longfellow told the story, Hiawatha one day trustingly left the lodge unguarded only to find that Pau-Puk-Keewis, "whom the people called the Storm-Fool," had entered his home, killed his pet raven, then ransacked the place. After an arduous hunt, Hiawatha slew his treacherous enemy. Only then:

Ended were his wild adventures,
Ended were his tricks and gambols,
Ended all his craft and cunning,
Ended all his mischief-making.

TIME

New Delhi

THE Government has seized an official Pakistan publication called Pakistan—Basic Facts. An Indian announcement yesterday said the handbook contained maps that "erroneously depict Kashmir as a disputed territory."

NEW YORK TIMES

Brussels

At the congress here of the European Cultural Foundation, M. Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, tried to define culture: "What is left after all the rest has been forgotten."

THE TIMES

pret correctly in three minutes phenomena on a radar screen. . . ." The officer wouldn't have to; he can send the bombers up, and then wait to see if it was really missiles or something else before sending them the order to retaliate.

Mr. Hudson says their vulnerability would be "reduced if we were able to provide a large number of supplementary airfields for dispersal. . . ." When they are at the alert, the V Bombers are at present dispersed in units of four. Lastly, he describes the V Bombers as "the most vulnerable form of deterrent." No; because they can fly off in two minutes and wait for orders, they are less vulnerable than unfortified land missiles such as Thor, Atlas, Titan and Jupiter. These have a longer reaction time, and cannot be recalled.

I am not arguing that we ought to keep the V Bombers, but that we ought to get the facts right before considering this question at all.

WAYLAND YOUNG

London

Poems

I SHOULD BE very glad to hear from any of your readers who have come across poems written by the inmates of Nazi concentration camps or ghettos.

I already have a great deal of material derived from books, but I am anxious to obtain, in particular, unpublished material. This material may be submitted in any language.

Ultimately it is hoped to publish the poems translated into English as an anthology.

P. CASIMIR

16 Prince Park
Chaulden
Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

CHRISTMAS AGAIN

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AUTHORS

Diana Trilling is a well-known American critic, the wife of Professor Lionel Trilling, and the editor of an edition of D. H. Lawrence's letters. Her Mailer study will appear in a Doubleday collection of essays which she and Nona Balakian are preparing. . . .

Lewis S. Feuer writes: "Part of the tragedy, I think, did take a distinctive Marxian form in the sense that the Marxist ethic tended to obliterate the personal element far more than the various types of religious ethics. Devotion to the socialist movement, in other words, was more of an all-sufficient criterion for judging even personal life than it was for other forms of ethics. . . ."

The story of Eleanor Marx has always seemed to me to exhibit in the most personal form some of the problems which arise when Marxism is taken as a way of life. Later Marxist thinkers and movements carried the repression of the individual personality to an extreme degree, but here in Eleanor's life at the very outset of the movement some of its shortcomings were foreshadowed. . . ."

Italian Journey, by J. W. Goethe, translated by W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Meyer, will be published by Collins in November, price six guineas.

Ingeborg Bachmann, "Diary of a Librettist" was translated by John Mander.

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